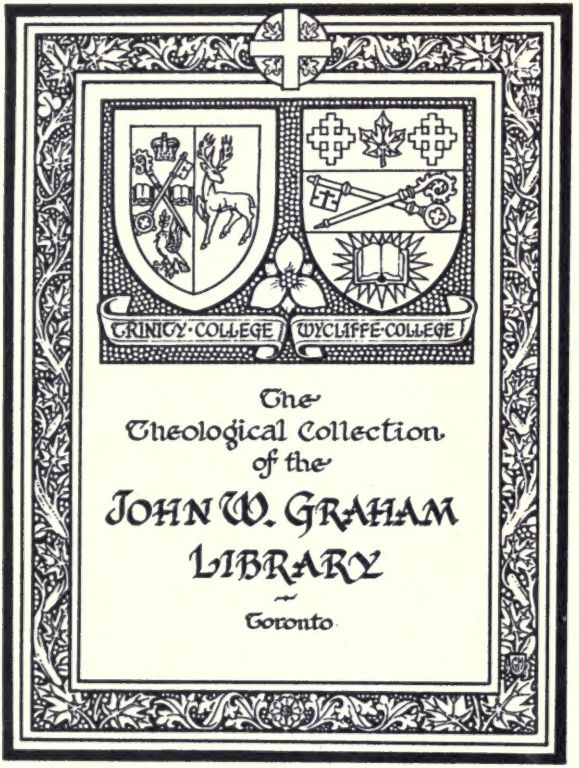

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

The Town Parson: His Life and Work. Being the substance of the Pastoral Theology Lectures delivered before the University of Cambridge, and at King's College, London, in the year 1914. Now written out and enlarged.

How to deal with Lads.

How to deal with Men.

Teaching for Lads.

Studies in Popular Theology.

Studies in the Devotional Life.

Studies in the Cross.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

BEING AN ATTEMPT TO SHEW THAT THE EXISTENCE OF SIN AND PAIN IN THE WORLD IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE GOODNESS AND POWER OF GOD

BY THE

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NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

THIS book is the outcome of a course of reading and thinking begun many years ago, and my conclusions remain quite unaffected by the events of the war. My sense of the importance of the Problem of Evil for theology and religion has indeed been deepened by these events, but my moral and intellectual attitude towards that problem is in other ways unaltered.

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INTRODUCTION

THE argument of this book may be summarised as follows :—

(I) The Omnipotence of God is either

(*A*) *Unlimited, i.e.* such that He could both do a thing and not do it at one and the same time ; or

(*B*) *Rational, i.e.* such that He can do all things that do not imply a contradiction.

If (*A*) then

There is no Problem of Evil to be solved, for

(*a*) God, not being subject to the 'law of contradiction,' ceases to be a possible object of human thought, and so all theology, and with it the problem of evil, comes to an end. And

(*b*) If God's omnipotence is unlimited, it must be possible for Him to create an infinite number of souls doomed to eternal torment for no fault of their own, and to reconcile such action with eternal justice, mercy, and love, since *ex hypothesis* nothing is impossible for a God of unlimited omnipotence.

If (*B*) then

Since God cannot, as infinitely Wise and Holy, do what would involve a contradiction (an absurdity) or what would be morally wrong (it is 'impossible for God to lie,' Heb. vi. 18), we may assert that *God Himself could not create a man with free will, and at the same time force him to choose good and not evil.*

(II) If the conclusion of stage I. in our argument is correct, we may assert that for a God of Rational Omnipotence there were, when man was created, only two alternatives.

(*A*) To create a being destitute of moral and spiritual freedom, *i.e.* an automaton or vitalised machine, which could be no fit object for God's love ; or

(*B*) To create a free spiritual being, capable of choice, or moral action, able to love and to choose between good and evil, but also, necessarily, capable of sinning.

If this is correct, and if we may assert that a God of infinite Love, Wisdom and Holiness could not rest content with mere machines as objects of His love, we may conclude that *the Fall of Man, and consequent corruption of human nature, cannot be said to have been necessary and inevitable, but that it was necessary that such a fall should be possible if God were to create moral beings.*

(III) If the conclusion of stage II. of our argument is correct, we may assert that, no matter what the nature of the Fall may have been, yet if and

when man chose evil rather than good there would be for a God of Rational Omnipotence but two alternatives.

(*A*) He might destroy man altogether; or

(*B*) He might, with infinite patience and love, try to lead him to repent and to choose holiness again freely.

There is one thing He could not do. He could not force him to be good, *i.e.* to choose virtue freely, for the idea of *forcing a free being to choose* involves a contradiction.

(IV) If man is in any sense a fallen creature, and if human nature is in any sense corrupt, then the evil of the physical universe follows necessarily, for

(*A*) If we accept the idealistic solution and regard the world as the expression of human spirit, the universe being what it is because man is what he is, then an imperfect race must necessarily inhabit an imperfect world. And if

(*B*) we reject the idealistic solution, we may still declare that it would be morally undesirable, and therefore for a good and loving God impossible, that a sinful race should inhabit a perfect and painless universe.

N.B.—The argument of this book is independent of the special view of the Fall taken in Chapter VII., and those who cannot accept that view may still accept the general argument.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL STATED

Personal Religion and the Problem of Evil—Is the Problem of Evil soluble?—Is a merely partial solution honest?—Illustration of a partial solution—Two distinct problems: (i) Sin, and (ii) Pain—The Moral Sense our court of appeal—The argument as far as possible practical.

PERSONAL RELIGION AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.—If, as seems daily more and more certain, the very essence of religion is to be found in a sense of the Fatherhood of God, so that the truly religious man is the man who strives to realise his relationship, as a child of God, and to strengthen and develop that relationship by submission to, and communion with, his Heavenly Father, then it must be obvious that the problem of evil has a very close connection with personal religion. How can a man rest in a sense of the fatherly love and mercy of God while he is vexed at heart by the daily evidence of what seems to him to be God's injustice, cruelty and fickleness? If God is indeed an infinitely powerful, infinitely loving, and infinitely just God, what place has pain and sin, above all, what place has useless pain and undeserved suffering, in His universe?

How can a man believe in a just and righteous God, much less in a tender and pitiful Father, while daily 'the righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart,' and there seems so much needless, useless, purposeless suffering in the world, and so little equation between desert and reward?

And as one can see the theoretical bearing of this question of Sin and Pain on personal religion, so a very small experience will convince any thoughtful man of its practical bearing. As a matter of fact, many men and women—and those, in many cases, the best and most thoughtful of their day—are held back from gaining a true personal religion by the pressure on their hearts and minds of the problem of the world's suffering. A good example of this attitude of mind was supplied by a young London journalist just starting work on a big daily paper and brought suddenly into close contact with the realities of sin and of suffering in a great city. Though a young man of quite unusual intellectual and moral power, his religion was shaken to its foundations and, after being obliged to investigate professionally one specially hideous case in the slums of Hoxton, he wrote to a clerical friend, in something like a panic, to ask, 'Can there be a God at all? And if there is a good and loving God, what is He doing in the slums of our big cities?'

And every great national calamity, the eruption of Mount Pelee, the 'Pretoria' Coal Mine Disaster, the wreck of the *Titanic*, or any similar catastrophe,

gives rise to the question as to the providential government of the world and the possibility of reconciling such events with a belief in a ruler of the universe at once all-powerful and all-good.

And although the examples adduced so far may be set aside as the result of over-excited feelings, and as due rather to hysterical emotion than to rational thought, the same cannot be said of the great body of educated and thoughtful men and women, many of them among the most active workers in social and philanthropic efforts for the good of their fellow-men, who have, after careful and often agonising thought, definitely put aside belief in a good and loving providence as inconsistent with the facts of the world, as we meet them in daily life. Such men and women, if they could be claimed for religion, would be an immense strength, an inestimable gain, to any Church. And who can say what such men and women would themselves give for a firm faith in God if only they could find a way to such a faith, or can estimate the sense of strength and peace which would come to them if they realised that they and all the whole world of struggling, suffering men and women were in the safe keeping of a loving Father ?

For all these reasons the problem of evil seems to be one particularly worth attacking. There are, here and there, men and women of such strong personal faith, and whose first-hand experience of God's dealings with them, as individuals, is so

strong and vivid, that they find it impossible to doubt either the existence or the loving-kindness of God. 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him,' [1] is still their cry. But such faith is not and cannot be universal. Nay, rather it seems as if, in most nations and in most ages, it must be the exception, not the rule. The ordinary man, confronted, whether in his own life or in the lives of those dear to him, with undeserved pain and suffering, still strives to understand these things, and finds them too hard for him. And though here and there a man may say 'until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I,' [2] yet for some, perhaps for the majority, the nature of the problem rather holds them back from the sanctuary of prayer and of communion with God than leads them to seek it. They look for God, and for signs, in the world and in history, of His working, and they cannot find them. For such men and women some working solution of the problem, or at least some suggestion that such a solution may be earned in time, seems a necessary preliminary to any real personal religion. Is such a solution in any way possible?

Is the Problem of Evil Soluble?—It may at first sight seem foolish to attempt any treatment of the problem of evil? It has, we shall be told, exercised the finest intellects in every age, and no

[1] Job xiii. 15. [2] Ps. lxxiii. 17.

man has found any solution. What then is the use of beating over again straw that has been threshed a thousand times before? What can we hope from such an attempt? Will it not prove once again a mere ploughing of the sand? Would it not be better to ticket the problem once for all *Insoluble* and put it aside for good and all?

Now to these questions we may reply that the problem probably is insoluble in the sense that no full, adequate, and exhaustive solution of it can be hoped for. But that is certainly no reason for ticketing it as such and laying it for ever aside. For the same is certainly true of every other problem that can be stated by man. If we insist on carrying any problem, no matter what, far enough, we shall reach a position where some ultimate questions are involved which are susceptible of no answer. This must be so, for *a full, complete and exhaustive reply to any problem—even the simplest—would involve a complete philosophy of God, Man, and the World, and so an answer to all possible questions.* This is what Tennyson meant when he wrote:

> 'Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies;—
> Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower—but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is.'

But we are not seeking a full, complete and exhaustive answer to the problem of moral and physical

evil, of such a character as will satisfy the philosopher. We are seeking merely such a reply to the obstinate questionings of man's moral being as will enable him, in the face of all the sin and suffering of the world, to retain a faith in the justice, mercy and love of God. It will be enough, and more than enough, if we can so handle the problem as to find some firm ground for our feet on which to take our stand when we strive to

> 'Assert eternal Providence
> And justify the ways of God to man.'

For until this is done many men find it impossible to gain any intellectual or moral peace, or to address themselves to what is man's true work in this world, namely active, conscious, willing co-operation with God in working for the conquest of evil and the victory of good. What we want is to be sure, or at the very least to recognise a balance of probabilities on the side of believing (1) that God is good and on the side of goodness, (2) that evil is not eternal or necessary, and (3) that we can work with God, as fellow labourers with Him, for the realisation of the abolition of all evil and the attainment of perfect good. The problem, at least as we are confronted with it, is mainly a moral and practical one, and we may quite justly be satisfied with a solution which falls far short of full intellectual adequacy. We may act, that is to say, in this as we do in every other practical matter in life, and rest content with

a solution of the problem which is practically adequate even while recognising that a solution which is ideally complete and perfect is beyond us.

Is a Merely Partial Solution Honest ?—It is probable that the last paragraph will have aroused some alarm and suspicion in the reader's mind. Is not the problem, even if it is a moral and practical one in its bearings on our lives, still actually an intellectual one ? And if that is so, can any solution which is not thorough, complete and searching, be worth troubling about ? Is it not just one of those problems on which we ought to insist on having either an ideally complete and perfect solution, or none at all ? To these questions we may reply that the treatment of the question shall be as thorough, complete and searching as any man likes to make it. There is no intention, in this volume at any rate, of doing what a schoolboy would call *fudging* the answer. There shall be no attempt to give, to any question raised, an answer which shall seem adequate to the plain man, unread in theology and metaphysics, while all the while the philosopher would know that it was unsound. The answers given to the various questions raised will be adequate and trustworthy *as far as they go*, though it may be, and indeed certainly will be, open to the trained metaphysician to point out that they leave unanswered, and unanswerable, many further questions to which a reply would be necessary

before the treatment of the problem could claim to be exhaustive. But that is no more than may be said of all answers to all questions of practical importance and moment. The fundamental questions of philosophy still remain in the background unanswered, and perhaps unanswerable.

It has been necessary to lay stress on the partial and practical nature of the solution of the problem of evil which is attempted in this book for two reasons. Firstly, it is necessary in order to secure a hearing at all, and secondly, it is necessary in order to protect ourselves from having the fruits of our labours rendered useless by criticism afterwards. It is necessary to lay stress on the partial and practical nature of the solution attempted, so as to secure a hearing at all, because many people are so certain that the problem of evil is insoluble that they can hardly be persuaded to address themselves to a serious examination of it. But this book is written in the conviction that *the problem of evil is insoluble in precisely the same way and to exactly the same degree that any other problem touching human life or conduct is insoluble, and in no other way and to no other degree.* And it is necessary to lay stress on the partial and practical nature of the solution attempted lest, when the plain man is thinking that he has got some help, and some practical guidance by which to live, the superior man should strike his winnings from his hand by pointing out that the solution offered is worthless

because it leaves unanswered the question of the nature of Reality, or of the possibility of Knowledge, or of the nature of Truth, or the relationship of the Self and the Not-Self. All these questions will be left unanswered, though there is not one of them but has some immediate bearing on the problem of evil. But they will be left unanswered not because any thoughtful man thinks them unimportant—for the view that Divine Philosophy has been, for 2500 years and more, a vain beating of the air, and a fruitless ploughing of the sand, may be left to those who know nothing of the subject—but for the same reason that they are left unanswered in all other practical discussions of subjects by which men live. We can no more postpone seeking to live our moral and spiritual life till we have answered all the questions that metaphysics can propound than we can postpone seeking our daily food and drink till we have solved every problem of chemistry or physiology. And as the chemist and the physiologist offer their laws of food-production and food-digestion to the manufacturer and the doctor without waiting for the metaphysician to supply an answer to the questions, What is matter ? and What is life ? so the theologian and teacher of morals may offer their solutions of the practical problems of our daily spiritual and moral life without waiting for a solution of all the fundamental questions of philosophy.

ILLUSTRATION OF A PARTIAL SOLUTION.—This distinction between a rigid philosophical solution of a problem and a partial and practical one is so important, in view of what is attempted in this volume, that it may be well to illustrate it by an example. Such an illustration is supplied by the question as to the value of prayer and the possibility of its being answered. Some twenty or five-and-twenty years ago, when purely mechanical views of the universe were at their height, and when the younger scientific men of the school of Huxley and Tyndall were displaying an unscientific dogmatism at its very worst, we were frequently assured that prayer which was anything more than a vague aspiration towards harmony with an already irrevocably fixed course of nature was quite futile, for science had proved that prayer could effect nothing either in the material universe or in man. Modern science, we were assured, had demonstrated the impossibility of prayer being answered, and was making for the gradual banishment from all regions of human thought of what we call spirit and spontaneity. How was the theologian to meet these attacks on the value of prayer?

On the one hand it may quite justly be urged that, not merely the possibility of prayer being heard and answered, but the possibility of there being a God capable of hearing it or independent spiritual beings able to offer it, involves the problem known to

philosophy as the problem of the One and the Many.[1] Till this problem has been solved all questions of the relationship of God to human souls, and of human souls to Him—among which questions that of prayer is clearly one—must remain *incapable of a rigid philosophic solution*. But that was no reason why theologians should allow over-confident young biologists and chemists to browbeat Christians out of their spiritual rights, and to deprive them of the joy and comfort of prayer, by means of obviously unscientific assertions. The young agnostic of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, who claimed that science had demonstrated the uselessness of prayer and the impossibility of its being answered, was not thinking of the problem of the One and the Many, and his arguments could be, and quite rightly were, met on an altogether lower plane of discussion. When, however, they had been so met it was still open to the student of philosophy to point out that the whole problem of prayer was still unsolved, and that the arguments advanced by the defenders of prayer left many difficulties unmet and many problems untouched. But though this would be perfectly true, it would be about as reasonable as it would be to point out to a doctor who had successfully refuted the dangerous contentions of a quack that his own arguments left unsettled such questions as the Origin of Life.

[1] Cf. Professor Ward on 'The Vacillation of Theology' in *The Realm of Ends*, p. 43, Cambridge University Press, 1911.

So in this book what is attempted is not a solution of the problem of the origin and nature of evil, but rather a practical answer to the question, Can there be a wise and beneficent author of such a world as we see around us? The essence of true religion being, as we have reason to believe, a loving trust in God as our Father, we want to see reasons for believing that the sin and suffering of the world are no sufficient arguments against the existence of an over-ruling Providence, nor against the goodness, justice and mercy of God.

Two Distinct Problems: (i) Sin, and (ii) Pain. —And in attacking this question of the problem of evil we must recognise that under this heading are included two distinct problems, namely, the problem of moral evil or sin, and the problem of physical evil or pain. The two problems are, at any rate at the outset, perfectly distinct. It may quite well turn out that any solution of them reveals them as being closely connected and as having one common origin, but as they are presented to us, here and now, in daily experience sin and pain are two totally distinct things, and nothing but confusion can result from failing to distinguish them clearly. All sorts of false analogies, and obvious confusions, and morally unsatisfactory attempts at a solution of the whole problem, are due to a failure to insist on the distinction. People point, for instance, to the obvious fact that pain is often a means to the

preservation and continuance of life—the child once slightly burnt avoids the fire, whereas if there had been no pain it would very likely the next time have been burnt to death; the pangs of approaching hunger stimulate men and animals to exertions without which life could not go on, but which they might never have made except under the spur of painful hunger. And, having observed the useful part played by pain in nature, they go on to argue that sin may, in the same way, have beneficial effects. No one, of course, possessed of a moral sense at all would ever argue that sin can benefit the sinner. But they suggest that in some way sin may play a useful part in the economy of the race or of the world. Similarly, they notice that pain is often a moral discipline yielding, if rightly endured, fine fruits of character. And then they argue as if sin might be also a moral discipline. But this it never is, and never can be. Discipline yields strength. Sin never yields, and never can possibly yield, anything but weakness. Discipline, freely accepted, yields fruits of character. The only fruit of sin is death; the partial death of paralysed will, and blinded spiritual insight, and perverted spiritual affections to begin with, and the complete death of final inability to repent, and to recognise the beauty of holiness, and to desire it and God, if persisted in. In a word, any true moral discipline strengthens the will, the intellect, and the affections; sin weakens and perverts all three. Yet the habit of using one

word, Evil, with the two meanings of Moral Evil or Sin, and Physical Evil or Pain, leads people to speak as if Sin could, as a form of discipline, play some part in God's plan for His creatures. This book will endeavour to deal with both problems, that of Sin and that of Pain. And we shall see that they are so closely allied that a race of sinful men could not possibly inhabit a painless and perfect world, and equally that a wholly redeemed and sanctified race of men would necessarily involve 'a new Heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' But notwithstanding the close connection between sin and pain, they are two totally distinct things and should never be confused, and will be treated separately in the volume. When both conceptions are included we shall speak of 'evil'; when it is necessary to distinguish them we shall speak of moral evil, or sin, and of physical evil, or pain, respectively. No one who has taken the trouble to think clearly can possibly, unless he suffers from a blunted moral sense, suppose that moral evil, or sin, can ever result in anything but evil to the sinner. This is not to say that God may not overrule the *effects* of a sinful act so as to bring good out of evil. But this is a wholly different question. What is here asserted is that sin—the act, that is to say, of sinful will on the part of a free moral being acting freely—can never be anything but evil, nor can its fruits of character in the sinner, as opposed to the physical results of the act done,

ever be anything but evil. Nothing but a confusion between physical and moral evil, of just that nature that we are considering, could have led Pope to declare—

> 'All discord, harmony not understood,
> All partial evil, universal good.'

THE MORAL SENSE OUR COURT OF APPEAL.—Finally, let it be said that in all our argument the appeal will be to the conscience and the religious experience of the plain man. Nothing can be gained by claiming the support of religion for any conclusion which is clearly abhorrent to the moral sense of a good man. It is of course likely, and indeed one may say certain, that we shall often be confronted with moral problems which man seems powerless to solve. Often God seems to act in a way which in man would be judged hard, cruel and unjust. We seek to understand these things, but they are too hard for us. Then a faith in the goodness and mercy of God—a faith abundantly justified by experience in a thousand other experiences of life—comes to our help. We bow the head and are content to believe where we cannot understand. 'Shall not the Judge of all the world do right?' we ask, and are content to answer Yes, at the command of faith even when understanding fails. But this is when we frankly admit that we cannot find a solution. Nothing is gained by pretending that what would be cruelty and injustice

in man is love and justice in God. Nothing is gained, rather much is lost, by offering, as a solution of a moral or intellectual difficulty, an answer which offends the conscience of a plain Christian. For such an answer itself constitutes a greater difficulty and stumbling-block to faith than the problem it is invoked to solve. Every sane man who believes in a God at all is prepared to find Him, at times, acting in a way he cannot understand, and is willing to believe that, often and often, to finite human beings, 'His ways are past finding out.' What we are not prepared for, and what constitutes a real hindrance to true personal religion, is to be asked to believe that He acts in a way which our consciences instinctively condemn. Far better admit the existence, in any particular case, or in any number of cases, of an insoluble mystery than accept a solution from which the moral sense of a good man recoils. And so in this book no solution will be considered satisfactory which does not commend itself to the sense of right on the same terms as it would be expected to commend itself if we were treating a human and not a Divine Agent. For indeed in the past those who have sought to 'justify the ways of God to man' have often been so anxious to leave no question unanswered, and in so great a haste to prove that God's ways are as perfect as their own hearts told them that they must be, that they have often added to the burden of distressed faith rather than diminished it. For they

have claimed to justify in God what would be unjustifiable in man, and to find that excusable and even commendable in a Being of infinite power, wisdom, and love which would be inexcusable in a poor, weak, fallible and tempted man. And so faith has been weakened and burdened rather than helped, and little ones have been offended. Whatever else may, or may not, be found satisfactory in the handling of the problem of evil in the Book of Job, one thing is very true to nature, and to our experience, and that is the condemnation, by God, of Job's three friends because they had not spoken of Him the thing that is right.[1] It is impossible to deny that theologians, in their zeal for God's honour, have too often dishonoured Him, and painted a picture of God which has repelled rather than attracted the best minds. Man must often fail to understand the ways of God; must always fail to understand them fully. But just when, and to the extent that, he understands Him and His ways, there and to that extent his moral consciousness must approve, and must delight in what is revealed to it. And so it is to the conscience of man, to his moral judgment, that the appeal must be addressed.

THE ARGUMENT AS FAR AS POSSIBLE PRACTICAL.—And though the subjects treated of will necessarily be difficult and obscure, and though it will often be necessary to follow a long and seemingly involved

[1] Job xlii. 7.

argument, yet, as far as possible, the arguments advanced will be such as every man may check and test against his own religious experience. When the reader, at the end of any argument, is constrained to say, not 'Yes, that seems a close, careful, and logical piece of reasoning from premises I can't deny,' but 'Yes, that is true, for I have noticed the same in my own life,' then the argument will be truly successful. For there is truly no other witness that we can call than that of experience. Not of course merely the experience of this or that individual, but *human experience*, the experience, that is to say, which has been the experience of some one or more individual human beings and might be the experience of any one. And every man should recognise the truth, in his own case, of the famous tag from Terence:

'humani nihil a me alienum puto,'

and strive, in moral and spiritual truth, to enlarge his experience and to bring all things to the bar of his own soul's experience. This surely is what the Apostle means when he bids us 'Try all things, hold fast that which is good.' And though no man has a right to reject a thing as false merely because it transcends his own experience, he has not merely a right, but an absolute duty, to give the fullest trust only to those things which he has so proved for himself and made his own; to accept other things only, as it were, on faith, because of his

reliance on the trustworthiness of his authorities; and finally to reject those things which contradict his own experience. Further experience, more earnest and sincere and prayerful thought over experience already ours, may lead us to modify our beliefs. Nothing can justify a man in accepting as true what seems to conflict with the witness of his own intellect and conscience. A thing may go against a man's conscience and still be true, for he may have misunderstood it. Yet if it goes against his conscience, it cannot be true *for him*; he has no right to accept it, except as a mystery held on faith in the hope that a solution may some day be found.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF GOOD AND EVIL

What is Evil?—Evil not merely relative—Moral Good and Evil, qualities of a Free Being—Three possible criticisms of this view—Do not circumstances alter cases?—Is the distinction between the goodness of spiritual and material things a real one?—Does not man exist merely for God?—What is meant by the expression 'man's true nature'?—The conclusion of the argument of this chapter.

WHAT IS EVIL?—If now we address ourselves to the question of the problem of evil, the first thing clearly is to get some idea of what we mean by evil. And it may help us to get this clear idea if we begin by examining one or two things which are often said about evil. One such saying, familiar to all students of theology and philosophy, is that there is really no such thing as evil. Evil, we are told, is a negative, a lack, a no-thing, a failure of something good, not a positive thing or quality. And, falling back on metaphor and analogy, the upholders declare that evil is absence of good as darkness is simply the absence of light. The reasons for this contention finding favour with many writers are obvious. Whether, with the pantheists, we say, 'Nothing exists but God; God is ALL and all is

God,' or whether, with more orthodox theologians, we prefer to say, 'God created all things; nothing exists but by His will, and all things continue in existence only by Him and in Him,' equally the existence of evil presents a difficult problem. The thorough-going pantheist of course faces the problem boldly. Evil according to many Eastern pantheistic systems is as much in God, and as much a manifestation of God, as good. God, according to this view, is as truly and as perfectly manifested in the snake, the tiger, and the harlot as in the dove, the martyr, and the saint. But Western thought, less logical but more strongly ethical than Eastern thought, has always shrunk from this view, which is indeed fatal to all religion and morality. And so philosophers and theologians alike have wearied themselves to prove the non-existence of evil. It is a lack, an illusion, a privation of good, a mere negation.

But while the reasons which have led philosophers and theologians to assert the merely negative character of evil are obvious, the exact meaning of the claim, and the results that may be deduced from it, are far from being equally clear. If one means that any particular vice may be *defined* by means of its opposite, so that avarice is defined as lack of generosity, and cowardice as lack of courage, there is an unimportant element of truth in the claim. Any particular thing *A* can always be defined as being *not not-A*. But this fact is not a

very striking or valuable one, and is certainly not worth all the talk that has been lavished, during the last five-and-twenty centuries, on the negative nature of evil. On the other hand, if we claim for the statement that evil is the negation of good anything more than this merely logical significance, it is most certainly not true. A man full of hatred and malice is certainly not the same as one who is not actively loving. His attitude of mind is not merely passive, negative, and unaffected. He is actively and positively affected by what may well be one of the most powerful of motives. If vice were simply the absence of virtue, and virtue the absence of vice, the jellyfish would be either the most vicious of created beings, or the most virtuous, or both at once, according as we regarded its lack of virtuous motives, or its lack of vicious motives, or its lack of all motives at all. There is a sense, as we shall see, in which evil is a negation of good, but it is so in such a sense as leaves a possibility for evil to be, at the same time, very real and actual. Before considering this solution, however, we may as well consider another thing often said of evil.

Evil not Merely Relative.—Another common claim which is very often met with is the claim that evil is but relative. What is evil in one set of circumstances, or at one particular point in time, might well be good under different circumstances, or at another time. This view, however, is due to two

common mistakes, namely, (1) the failure to recognise the various senses in which we use the single word 'good' and (2) the difference between a *good thing, i.e.* a thing which is good for some purpose or other for which it is desired, and a *good spiritual being, i.e.* a free agent acting virtuously. A thing may be good under one set of circumstances and bad under another set. Dirt has been defined as matter in the wrong place, and that which is dirt when trodden into drawing-room carpet may be valuable soil on your garden beds. But in passing this judgment we are judging soil not in or for itself but as useful or mischievous to man. We must not so judge a free moral agent, for he is not a means to the satisfaction to some one else, but an end in himself. If we are to judge men as we judge things, we must conclude that assassination is not wrong because Richard III. found a couple of cut-throats come in very handy when he wanted the little princes murdered in the Tower. Similarly, to argue that good and bad when used of moral agents and not merely of inanimate things—good and bad, that is to say, when used in the sense of virtuous and vicious—are merely relative terms because the violent, ill-tempered, ungovernable man may be a very useful member of a savage tribe waging war to the death with a neighbouring tribe, is an ethical mistake. Judged as a member of his tribe the untamed ruffian may be a very valuable asset—though even so, when the hostile tribe has

been exterminated and the victors wish to settle down quietly to the enjoyment of their victory, he will probably be found not a valuable asset but an intolerable nuisance—but judged as a man he must be condemned as bad. Why he is so to be condemned as bad we shall see presently. At present it will be enough to point out that he probably makes himself miserable, that he certainly makes his wife and children miserable, and that except in an abnormal state of society he is, as has been said, a nuisance to his tribe. So we will conclude that it is not true to say that good and evil, virtuous and vicious, are merely relative terms. All we can say in the case of free moral beings is that, under certain conditions, acts and qualities which are always to be unequivocably condemned as *bad* may for a time prove *useful*.

Moral Good and Evil, Qualities of a Free Being.—Has what has been said on the question of the non-existence of evil, and the relative nature of the terms good and bad, led to any clear conception as to what we mean by these terms? It certainly should have done. Firstly, we may surely claim that *Good and Evil are not distinct entities but qualities of things and of persons.* It is in one sense quite true that evil has no real existence, just as it is quite true that red has no real existence, or heaviness has no real existence. No one can hand me a yard of red, or a pint of red, although he may hand me a

yard of red ribbon or a pint of red wine. A heap of heaviness or a couple of pounds of weight are meaningless expressions. But there can be a heap of heavy stones or a couple of pounds of such a weighty substance as lead. *Goodness and badness are qualities of things and of persons.* Moral goodness (virtue) and moral badness (wickedness) are qualities of a moral agent acting freely, of a free spiritual being, that is to say, who chooses freely. And physical goodness or badness is a quality of material objects. And if we want a definition of goodness or of badness we may find it in this, that a thing or person is good when it fulfils the purpose for which it exists, and bad when it departs from its true nature, and fails to fulfil the object of its being. And here we can see the reason why the goodness or the badness of a material thing is a relative term, while the goodness or badness of a moral agent is a positive quality. For a thing does not exist for itself, and we do not value it for itself, but it exists for us and we value it as it meets or fails to meet our needs. But a thing may meet one man's needs and fail to meet another's. Thus the substance which is very useful for destroying life, and is therefore a good vermin-killer, may be very bad for nourishing life, and so is a bad baby food. Or again, a thing may meet a man's needs at one time and fail to do so under another set of circumstances. Thus a man may find his knife excellent for pruning rose trees, and so may describe it as 'the best knife

I ever had,' while a few minutes after, having tried to use it to defend himself against the sudden attack of an escaped homicidal lunatic, he may have found it useless, and so may exclaim, 'I had nothing in my hand to defend myself with but this wretched thing.' But a free moral being is not a means to any one else's ends, and so is not to be judged now good and now bad according as he fulfils or fails to fulfil them. He is judged good or bad according as he attains or fails to attain to the ideal of a man, according as he realises or fails to realise what we call his true nature. What this true nature is it may be very difficult to say. But we certainly have such an ideal. We show it when we exhort a man who is acting foolishly or wickedly to *be a man*, meaning that he should try to be what a man ought to be.

So then we may say that goodness and badness consist in the realisation, or failure in realisation, of a certain standard, ideal, or plan. And in the case of material things this ideal is imposed from without, and several such ideals may be imposed by different people, and so one and the same thing may be judged now good and now bad, and the goodness or badness of material things is relative, being measured by reference to variable standards of need or of taste. But the case of free spiritual beings, or moral agents, is different. Here the ideal is not a varying one, imposed from without, but a single and invariable one imposed from within

by the person's true nature. And so in the case of the moral agent it is not true that good and evil, virtue and wickedness, are relative terms.

And as we have seen in what sense it is true, and in what sense it is false, that good and evil are merely relative terms, so we can recognise now in what sense evil is merely negative. Evil is negative in this sense, that it is a departure from, and failure to attain, a particular ideal or standard, a standard which in the case of material objects is variable and arbitrarily imposed and imposed from without, but in the case of moral beings a standard which is fixed, inherent in the true nature of the individual, and imposed by that nature.

THREE POSSIBLE CRITICISMS OF THIS VIEW.—The nature of good and evil, and the character of the judgments which we pass on persons and things, are questions so vital to the whole subject of this book that it may be as well to consider three criticisms which may be directed against the view of moral and physical goodness and badness which has been just advanced in the last paragraph. They are not, of course, the only three criticisms which can be directed against the view in question. But they are worth considering here and now, as they will help to make the point of view adopted in this book more clear. The criticisms are as follows :—

(i) It has been said that the goodness or badness of a free moral being is never a relative goodness

or badness, so that it might be judged good at one time and bad at another, but is always a positive goodness or badness conditioned by the extent to which the man attains to, or departs from, his true nature. *But is it not true that circumstances alter cases, and that an act that may be good at one time may be bad at another?*

(ii) It has been said that material things are judged good or bad as they conform or fail to conform to purely arbitrary standards, of which standards there may be many, and all of which are imposed from without. But have not material things, animate and inanimate alike, also a nature of their own to which they can conform or fail to conform, so that a diamond may be a poor specimen of a diamond, or a fox-terrier an ill-bred one? *Does not the distinction then between the judgments we pass on material things on the one hand, and on free spiritual beings on the other hand, break down and prove to be a distinction without a difference?*

(iii) It has been said that material things do not exist for themselves, but for us, and are judged good or bad as they serve, or fail to serve, man's ends, and conform, or fail to conform, to standards of value arbitrarily imposed from outside by man. A free spiritual being, on the other hand, exists, it has been claimed, not as a means to any one else's ends but as an end in himself, and is good or bad therefore, not in proportion as he attains, or fails to attain, to a standard arbitrarily imposed from without,

but in proportion as he reaches or fails to reach an ideal imposed from within, the true ideal of his own nature. But is it not true that man exists for God as truly as material things exist for man? and ought not a man to be judged good or bad by reference to the Moral Law, which is but the expression of God's plan for man, imposed by God from without?

Does not therefore the distinction that has been drawn between the judgments we pass on material things, and on spiritual beings, break down again?

Let us consider each of these objections in turn. It will be possible to show that not one of them really holds good.

Do not Circumstances Alter Cases?—It is asked whether circumstances do not alter cases, so that an act that may be good at one time may be bad at another? That is perfectly true, but if we consider the matter closely we shall see that this does not in the least affect the truth of the claim that a man (a free spiritual being) is judged by a standard which is the expression of his own true being, and not as he serves or fails to serve another person's ends, or meets or fails to meet any standard imposed from without. For moral judgment, rightly understood, is judgment passed not on an act, or acts, but on moral beings. Let us take a concrete case. A man who shoots his wife in a fit of rage is justly condemned as a murderer. A man who, after

defending his house as long as possible against cruel and barbarous savages, shoots his wife, when resistance is no longer possible, in order to protect her from torture or dishonour is universally acquitted. Now of the act of shooting we may say that it was timely or premature, desirable or undesirable. We cannot with strictness judge it virtuous or wicked. Speaking loosely, we do of course say that the act was right or wrong. What we really mean is that the man was right or wrong to do it. And how do we judge the man? By reference to our standard of what is good in man. 'You may say what you like,' a man declares, 'I admire the man for acting as he did. Any decent fellow would do the same.' Here the moral judgment passed on the man is clearly dependent on our ideal of what constitutes a good and virtuous man. So though it is true that circumstances alter cases, and an act that may be good at one time is bad at another, yet good and bad in this case, being applied to acts, and not to free moral agents, must be interpreted to mean desirable or undesirable, useful or harmful, timely or premature. The moral judgment applies only to free moral agents. Only such can be judged good or bad in the sense of being virtuous or wicked. And such will be judged by reference to a standard which is supplied by the true nature of man.

There is, of course, a special case of the general law that circumstances alter cases, in which the

moral virtue or moral guilt of the agent seems specially implicated. I mean the case of good men acting differently under different religious codes, or different moral standards. Abraham, it may be said, was perfectly blameless when he took Sarah's maid to wife; a man who would do so to-day would be a wicked man. But let us first ask what are the reasons which make us condemn a man to-day who is unfaithful to his wife. Without going into any very searching analysis we may say that we do so (i) because such an act is contrary to our religion, (ii) because experience has proved that monogamy is the happiest and the most natural condition for men, and works best in practice, and (iii) because, as an outcome of the first two reasons, the standard morality of our day condemns such connections. None of these considerations applied in the case of Abraham. So we praise Abraham and blame his imitator to-day, not because polygamy was right then and wrong now (for the word right as applied to an act can, as has been said, only mean desirable, useful or timely, and Abraham's act proved itself none of these, but produced the unfortunate results which might have been expected), but because Abraham acted up to the best he knew and the loose-living man does not so act. And we have no higher moral idea for man than that he should will to do what he believes to be right. But as our full ideal for man includes intellectual and aesthetic excellence, as well as moral, we may still

say that Abraham would have been a yet nobler figure if he had seen clearly the evils of polygamy, and taken but one wife. He would have been a more noble and admirable figure as adding clear intellect to his other good qualities. But we cannot judge that he would have been a more virtuous man, unless we see reason to hold that his failure to recognise the evils of polygamy sprang from some moral weakness, which there is no reason to suppose. So then we conclude (i) that moral praise and blame apply rightly only to persons, not things ; (ii) that though circumstances alter cases, and though we are compelled to take circumstances into account in estimating a man's actions, yet the goodness or badness of the man himself is not a relative goodness or badness but a positive one to be estimated with regard to the true nature of man ; and (iii) though ignorance may excuse mistakes of judgment, and the choice of false ideals, and the following of wrong customs and standards, yet a man is to be judged good or bad by what *he is*—gentle, kind, pure, truthful, honest, brave—and not by what he *does*.

Is the Distinction Between the Goodness of Spiritual and Material Things a Real One ?—The next criticism raised was as to whether material objects, whether animate or inanimate, had not a nature of their own to which they could conform, or fail to conform, so that the distinction between judgment passed on free moral beings and on

material things would be a distinction without a difference. To take the examples already taken—cannot a diamond be condemned as a poor specimen because it is yellow or irregularly crystallised, or a fox-terrier because it has its front legs bowed like a bull-terrier, or has a feathery tail like a collie? To this it may be replied that every material thing has a nature of its own, but not one to which it can conform or fail to conform, but one from which it cannot possibly vary. The diamond which we condemn as a poor specimen is just as much a diamond as the most perfect specimen which we praise. We condemn the yellow and irregularly crystallised one because it fails to conform to *our taste in diamonds*. If some freak of fashion created a desire for yellow and irregularly crystallised stones, at once the poor specimen would become a splendid specimen. Similarly, we condemn the fox-terrier with a feathery tail, because it does not conform to the ideals of the Kennel Club. But it is just as truly a dog; and judged by other standards might be deemed a better dog than one which now wins the prize. And if a dog were born with horns like a sheep, and a hump like a camel, it could not be condemned as a bad dog. It would possibly be an entirely new creature, but it would conform to its own nature. It would be no subject for moral praise or blame. The shepherd might call it a useless monstrosity. Barnum might call it a priceless specimen. Each would judge it as good or bad

according as it was useful or useless to himself. But if a man has no sense of right and wrong, if he is cruel, false, mean, proud, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, he is condemned as bad, and no change of fashions, or standards of judgment, can alter the fact, nor can the fact that such a man may, under exceptional circumstances, prove useful to his employer, or even to the State, justify his being what he is. He departs from the true nature of man.

Does not Man Exist only for God?—Again, it may be asked—Does not man exist only for God, just as material things exist for man? If that is so, is not man to be judged good or evil only as he meets God's ends, just as an animal or a thing is judged good or evil as it meets or fails to meet man's desires? Certainly there is a sense in which man exists only for God, and a sense in which he may be said to be good only in as far as he meets God's requirements. But there is also a sense in which this is not true, and this is a point of the very first importance in ethics. Let us approach the question by asking—Why should man obey the commands of God? Because God made man? But man did not ask to be created. If a man says that he regards life as a curse and not a boon, and that he will not obey the laws of his Creator, it is hard to see how he can be condemned morally. God can punish man if he does not obey. True! but that carries with it

no moral obligation to obey. If a man says,—I will disobey and take the consequences, why is he to be blamed? Prometheus did that, and he is a noble and heroic figure. And if it were possible to conceive of a race of moral beings created by a wicked deity, it would be the duty of every virtuous member of such a race to defy his god. What then is the Moral Law, and what is the obligation on me to obey it? The Moral Law is the expression of what God is, the exposition, as it were, of His true nature. And it is binding on man because man was made in the image and likeness of God, and so the Moral Law is the expression of man's true nature. I do not know any other explanation of that mysterious word 'ought.' What do you mean when you say that man *ought* to do this or that? You do not mean, as the Utilitarians have tried to prove, that it will be for the man's advantage, or even for 'the greatest good of the greatest number.' For *fiat justitia, ruat caelum*, let right be done though the heavens fall. You do not mean that it will be likely to prove pleasant, as the Hedonists taught, or that it is such conduct as will, on the whole, tend to the preservation of the race, as the modern teacher of evolutionary ethics teaches; for the ethical imperative, rightly understood, takes no account of results, and even the most uncritical man distinguishes in his own mind between what is right and what is merely likely to prove pleasant or safe. There seems but one solution, and that is

supplied by the idea of man's true nature. A man *ought* to do what is dictated by his true nature. And this will coincide with God's commands because man's true nature is a reflection of God's true nature. Only the belief that God made man in His own likeness can reconcile the two otherwise conflicting claims of God's law and the law of man's true nature.

What is Meant by the Expression 'Man's True Nature'?—But, it may well be asked, What is meant by man's true nature? To say that man must follow the dictates of his nature is a very dangerous doctrine. If a man is naturally hot tempered, is he right to give way to anger? Does not a great part of moral effort consist in resisting the dictates of our nature? On the other hand, to say that the nature man is to live up to is not his actual nature, but his nature as he ought to be, seems to land us in a circular argument. Thus:

Q. What is right for man to do?

A. What his true nature dictates.

Q. What is his true nature?

A. That which dictates only what is right.

Clearly this is not very valuable. It gets us no forwarder. But what does get us forwarder is the belief that a man's true nature is a reflection of the nature of God, and that conscience, if we strive to develop it, will reveal to us what is right and what is

wrong—'The spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.'

Some people would say that the true nature of man has been once for all declared in Jesus Christ. That is true, but it does not help us as much as might at first appear, since we are only able to see what we have eyes to see, and consequently we still fail to realise all that is included in the true ideal of human nature as revealed in Jesus Christ. Any really thoughtful student of human nature must realise two things, namely, (i) that there has been a steady advance through the centuries in the understanding of what is implied in Christ's character and teaching, and (ii) that still an immense portion of that teaching and character remains unappropriated and uninterpreted by our own generation, a mere dead letter to us, and without significance. Christ has been in every age, and still is to this generation—'He that shall come.' Indeed, I think we may invert the great mystical text in the third chapter of the First Epistle of St. John, and, instead of reading 'When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is'—read 'When we are like Him, He shall appear; for we ever see Him as we are.' The teaching of the mystics that like is only seen by like is a profound truth. And so though the perfection of human nature has been revealed in Jesus Christ, yet it is hidden from us except in so far as the Holy Spirit re-makes us in the same image. We see as much of

Him as we are able to see. Hence, the true nature of man is an ideal slowly revealed, a gradually evolving figure, a goal always receding before us as we strive to attain to it.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE ARGUMENT OF THIS CHAPTER.—The conclusions to which we have arrived in this chapter are then as follows :—

(i) That a person or thing is judged good or bad according as it realises or fails to realise the object for which it exists.

(ii) That material things exist for men, and consequently the goodness or badness of a material thing is always relative, one and the same thing being good for one person's purposes, or in one set of circumstances, but bad for another person's purposes, or in another set of circumstances.

(iii) That, on the contrary, every human being exists in and for himself, and is an end for himself, and never merely a means to any one else's ends. Hence his goodness or badness is not relative, but actual and positive, being an actual conformity to, or departure from, his own nature.

(iv) That hence moral praise or blame can only be passed on free moral beings, never on things. Judgments on things—animate or inanimate—and on actions, as actions judged apart from the doers of them, being always judgments of utility and not moral judgments.

(v) That man's true nature is an actual standard,

laid up as it were in Heaven, as a standard of measurement in the same way as the standard yard measure is laid up in the Mint as a norm or pattern by which all other yard measures are judged.

(vi) That this true nature of man is the reflection of the nature of God.

(vii) That the law of God for man is morally binding on man, not because God can inflict punishment if it is broken, but because, being the expression of God's nature, it is also the expression of man's true nature.

(viii) That, though it is not fully known and recognised as yet, still the ideal of man's true nature does supply such a goal or pattern for conduct as we can aim at without moving in a vicious circle.

(ix) That this true nature of man has been once for all revealed in the Man, Christ Jesus.

(x) That, nevertheless, it still waits to be perfectly revealed to each individual man, and progressively in each generation, since we only see as much of the true character of Christ as we are fitted to see.

(xi) It is clearly implied that man falls short of this ideal. But nothing has as yet been said as to whether this is because man has never yet attained it, and is slowly evolving towards it, or because he is a fallen being, who is slowly striving to regain what he has lost.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE

The problem re-stated — A concrete example — The nature of God's Omnipotence—What then is possible to God?—Can we recognise any reason for this distinction of possibilities?—Importance of this conclusion—An example of an essentially impossible action—The conclusion of the argument of this chapter.

THE PROBLEM RE-STATED.—We have now an idea of moral evil which will enable us to attack the problem which is before us. When we speak of the existence of moral evil we mean the existence of men and women who depart, more or less widely, from the ideal of human nature. Similarly physical evil, or the evil of material things, is a departure from the nature *which we desire for them as means to our ends*. A volcano in violent eruption is as *natural* an object, and as much a product of natural law, as a field of ripe corn. I describe it as an evil because it does not serve my ends. So too a cancer is—speaking as a naturalist and not a physician—as *natural* a growth, and as much subject to natural laws, as a rose. I describe it as a hideous disease because it does not serve man's ends. And this failure on our own part, on the part of other men and

women, and on the part of material objects (alike animate and inanimate and alike within and without the human body), to conform to our ideals and to serve our ends gives rise to pain, suffering of body or of mind. The problem of evil then is this :

Why does God allow human beings to be other than their true nature requires ?

and

Why has He seemingly created the world so that it fails to satisfy men's needs without pain and suffering, often most extreme ?

These two questions appear to state the problem of evil in its most general form. There are of course many other questions which confront us in this connection, such as why the guiltless suffer for the guilty, and why there often seems no use, or object gained, in suffering. But it is not necessary at this point to include these considerations. They only become important when some attempt has been made to supply an answer to the really fundamental questions formulated above. If any one attempts to solve the problem of pain by saying that suffering is a punishment of sin, he clearly leaves the first of our questions still unanswered. And he lays himself open to the retort, Why then do the righteous often suffer for the wicked ? And if any man attempts to solve the problem of pain by asserting that suffering is a valuable moral discipline, he also leaves our first question unanswered, and lays himself open to

the question, Why then is so much suffering seemingly useless and barren of results? There is no need to deny that suffering may be a punishment for sin, or that it may be a valuable moral discipline. But neither of these considerations is relevant at this stage of the discussion, and the two questions we have asked above sufficiently formulate the problem. Why does God allow sin and suffering? This is the really vital question, for it touches the very heart of religion, namely, our belief about, and our trust in, God. Is He Almighty? Then surely He could abolish sin and pain if He chose. Is He All-loving? Then surely He would choose to do so if he could.

> 'We look on helplessly.
> There the old misgivings, crooked questions are—
> This good God,—what He could do, if He would,
> Would, if he could—then must have done long since:
> If so, when, where and how?'

A Concrete Example.—A concrete example may help to make the problem clear. Let us suppose a young man is at the University in his second year. Suddenly his father, a lawyer, is convicted of misappropriating trust funds, and is sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. The young man's mother, previously a gentle and virtuous lady, is driven by her shame and despair to drink, and dies in a pauper lunatic asylum. His sister, a delicate girl, falls into a decline and dies for lack

of necessary food and care. He himself, unable to complete his course for a degree, leaves the University and fails to get any post as a schoolmaster, for which he had been preparing himself, and ultimately is glad to accept 20s. a week as a copying clerk. A friend, seeing the way in which the innocent suffer with the guilty, indignantly inquires what sort of God He can be who made a world in which such things are possible? But surely it is relevant also to inquire what sort of world it would be in which such things were not possible? There seem to be three answers to the second question. They are:

(1) A world in which there was no sin, so that the father could not have committed the original crime of embezzlement from which all the sufferings sprang, or
(2) A world in which no such relationships as those of father and son, husband and wife, brother and sister, existed, or
(3) A world in which, though such relationships existed, yet a wife or son felt no grief or shame at the sin of husband or father; where a son or brother was quite untouched by the sad death of mother or sister; in a word, a world where men and women were without moral shame or natural affection.

Can any other types of world be suggested in which the story imagined above would be impossible?

If God were to say, 'You condemn Me for this suffering? Well, take My creative power and re-create the world to please yourself and to suit your own sense of justice and mercy,' could we think out a world in which such a story would be impossible, which would yet be an improvement on this world? No doubt we all feel tempted at times to think that we could effect minor improvements. For instance, we think the guilty alone should suffer, and the sins of the father should always be visited on themselves, never on their children. If we had the management of the world punishment should always be proportionate to desert, and pain should always be clearly useful, and no more than is necessary. And so on, and so on. But surely all will admit that neither our second nor third alternative, neither, that is to say, a world devoid of natural relationships, nor one devoid of natural affection and moral shame, would be any improvement on the present. And as for sin, that takes us direct to the central question of all, namely—

Is God responsible for Man's sin?

For to blame God for creating a world in which such a story as is told above is possible, is in effect demanding that God shall create a world in which sin is impossible, or in which we shall have all the advantages of parents, relations and friends, but no sorrow or shame when those we love sin. Is such an implied demand on our part reasonable? *Is*

it possible for God to create such a world? Can we answer this question?

THE NATURE OF GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE.—Clearly before we presume to blame God for doing, or not doing, this or that, we must seek to determine what is the nature of God's omnipotence. Is there anything of which we can say that it would be impossible for God? At first, of course, our impulse is to say that everything must be within the power of an omnipotent God. But further thought will show that there is at least something to be said on the other side. For instance, let the reader put this question to himself—Would it be possible for God at one and the same time both to create me and not to create me? If God willed it, could a man both exist and not exist? Now there are clearly two views of God's omnipotence possible, according as a man answers Yes or No to these questions. Dr. M'Taggart, in his book entitled *Some Dogmas of Religion*, denies that the word Omnipotent can be rightly applied to God if there is anything impossible to Him, and would, therefore, offer to theists the choice of answering the above question with an affirmative or admitting that the God they worship is not omnipotent. If the discussion is merely one of words, and we are supposed to be disputing whether philologically the word omnipotent can be applied to a Being to whom *anything* is impossible, Dr. M'Taggart may be right. But if the discussion

is one of philosophical and theological importance, it can, I think, be shown that far more is lost than gained by claiming for God an omnipotence of such a nature that He should be able at one and the same time both to do and not to do a thing, both to create and not to create a world. For suppose we do claim this, answering the questions asked above with a Yes, what follows? Three very important things follow.

(1) We commit ourselves to complete agnosticism. God ceases to be for us a possible object either of thought or of speech. For, as Dr. M'Taggart has himself said, in his earlier work, *Hegelian Cosmology*, a thing which does not come under the Law of Contradiction, is not a possible object of thought or speech. If, when I say that my brother is taller than I am, I am not to be understood as denying that he is shorter than I, I am not understood at all, and might just as well not have spoken. If the statement that the whole is greater than its parts is to be regarded as not irreconcilable with the statement that the part is greater than the whole, not merely all speech but all thought becomes useless and meaningless. And this is as true when we are speaking of God as when we are speaking of any other subject. It may, of course, be true that God's omnipotence is of such a nature that He can at once both do and not do a thing, but in that case we cannot profitably think or speak of Him at all. He is no object of human thought. The most

absolute and thorough-going agnosticism is the only possible attitude for man to take up.

(2) If we adopt this view of the unlimited nature of God's omnipotence, we not merely destroy all philosophy and theology by making God an impossible object of thought, but we depart entirely from the teaching of Scripture, which asserts that God cannot contradict Himself, and that it is impossible for God to lie. It may be urged that this is merely what we call a moral impossibility. That is quite true; the impossibility springs from the nature of God as perfect Holiness. But equally it may be impossible for God, as perfect Wisdom (that is to say, as perfectly and supremely rational, the perfect expression of Reason), to act in a self-contradictory way. For if God can both do a thing and not do it, or in any other way act in such a manner as to outrage our reason, without derogating from His nature as perfect Wisdom, why should He not act in such a way as to outrage our moral sense, without departing from His character as perfect Holiness? If we believe that man is made in God's likeness and image, and that our ideas of goodness, truth, and beauty are God-given, or to put it in another way, that our moral sense, intellect, and love of beauty are reflections of the nature of God, then we may confidently assert that it *is* impossible for God to lie, and that He cannot both create and not create a universe, or in any other way act contrary to reason.

(3) If we adopt the view of what I have called the unlimited nature of God's omnipotence, we involve ourselves in conclusions which, from the days of Plotinus, among non-Christians, and the so-called Dionysius the Areopagite, among Christians, have always proved fatal to theology and ethics. I do not mean that either of the men named were indifferent to God or to right and wrong. Plotinus was one of the greatest philosophers, and seemingly one of the most beautiful characters, the world has ever known, and the way in which most writers treat pseudo-Dionysius merely proves that they know nothing of him, or of his spiritual children in every age, or of the way in which a re-awakened interest in his writings has proved, not once nor twice, but again and again, the spark which has kindled a revival in religion. But nevertheless the view of God which regards Him merely as the unconditioned-absolute of whom no limits, qualifications, or predicates can be asserted inevitably destroys theology and leads to such sayings, even on the part of so great a saint and scholar as Eckhart, as the following:

'God is nameless, for no man can either say or understand aught about Him. If I say, God is good, it is not true; nay more, I am good, God is not good. I may even say, I am better than God, for whatever is good, may become better, and whatever may become better, may become best. Now God is not good, for He cannot become better, He cannot become best, for these three

things, good, better and best are far from God, since He is above all. If I also say, God is wise, it is not true; I am wiser than He. If I also say, God is a Being, it is not true; He is transcendent Being and Superessential Nothingness. Concerning this St. Augustine says: the best thing that man can say about God is to be able to be silent about Him.'

WHAT THEN IS POSSIBLE TO GOD?—If then we deny that God can at once do and not do a thing; if, that is to say, we claim that God is Himself subject to the Law of Contradiction—and, as we have seen, to make such a claim is so far from being dishonouring to God, that it is honouring Him as Good and Rational as against those who would make Him Non-moral and Irrational—what, it may be said, is impossible to God? We may well adhere to Bible language and say that He cannot contradict Himself. He cannot, that is to say, do anything that would involve a contradiction. We must, of course, be very careful how we decide that any particular thing involves a contradiction. For instance, it is sometimes asked whether God could will that 2 and 2 should make anything else than 4, or that the angles of a triangle should be either more or less than two right-angles. As to whether God could ordain that 2 and 2 should make anything but 4, I will not express an opinion. But God could most certainly have so ordered things that the angles of a triangle should be greater or less than two right-angles. For this depends on

the nature of space. But though time and space are necessary conditions of thought to men, there is no reason to suppose either that they are so to God, or that God need necessarily have ordained for man a space such as we know it. The curvature of space, an idea familiar to all mathematicians, or space of four or more dimensions, are conceptions which correspond to nothing in the *known* universe, but there is no reason to deny that God could have created a universe in which elliptical or hyperbolical space would have given us triangles of less or more than two right-angles ; or again, a universe of four or more dimensions, the possibilities of which are beyond us. But I cannot see any reason to suppose that a world could have been created in which the Law of Contradiction should be abrogated so that a thing could, at one and the same time, be and not be. We may not be able to say in anything like detail what is possible to God and what is impossible. Each case may need to be considered on its merits. But we surely are justified in recognising that there are things which are impossible even for a God to whom the title Omnipotent is rightly applied. And we may certainly make this claim to the extent of denying that God can do anything which involves a contradiction, since to refuse to acknowledge this results necessarily, as has been said, in the conclusion that God is not a possible object of thought.

CAN WE RECOGNISE ANY REASON FOR THIS DIS-

TINCTION OF POSSIBILITIES ?—It may seem to some people unreasonable to claim that God could have created a universe so different from the present one that the most fundamental properties of time and space would have been reversed, but could not have created a universe so different from the present one that the Law of Contradiction should also be reversed—so that the same thing should both be and not be—nor one in which the moral law should have been reversed so that love, mercy, humility, and unselfishness should be bad, and hatred, cruelty, arrogance and selfishness should be good. But the solution of this difficulty may possibly lie in this, that God cannot contradict Himself. The laws of reason, of right and wrong, and of beauty are the expression of the nature of God Himself who is perfect Reason, Holiness, and Beauty, and a reversal of these would be a change in the nature of God Himself. But it is at any rate possible that the laws of mathematics are but the expression of the nature of the physical universe, and would have been different if that universe had been made differently. For when we speak of natural law we use the word Law as meaning a *Norma* or expression of a normal relation and not as meaning a *Lex* or expression of an arbitrary enactment. Now a norma will change when, and only when, the thing whose nature it expresses changes. If then moral laws—and the laws of thought and aesthetics—are the expression of God's nature, and of human

nature as far as it is a reflection and copy of the Divine Nature, we are justified in regarding them as necessary and unchangeable. On the other hand, if natural laws are the expression of the nature of the material universe, we are justified in regarding them as provisionally necessary and unchangeable, *the universe being what it is*. But at the same time we may recognise that the universe might have been made quite different, in which case natural laws would have been different also. So that we are obliged to recognise a great number of varying degrees of possibilities, and to conclude that even the saying, 'With God all things are possible,' needs to be understood in such a way as shall not contradict the saying that it is impossible for God to lie, and that God cannot contradict Himself.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS CONCLUSION.—The importance of this view of God's omnipotence has been already hinted. The chief practical importance of the problem of evil—its importance, that is to say, not as a problem of philosophy but as affecting men's attitudes to religion—lies in this, that men are inclined angrily to condemn God for allowing this or that evil to continue. If He is truly good and truly Almighty He could and would abolish sin and pain, we are assured. The working man who said, 'Do you think if I had God's power I would allow men and women to suffer as they do in Manchester?' may have expressed himself crudely,

but his underlying thought was probably one common to many men. Nor if we accept what may be called an unlimited view of God's omnipotence, is it any use to point out that pain and suffering may be means to a good end, since if there are no limits to God's power He could have attained the same ends by other means which would have been free from pain. A Being who could attain his ends by means which would be free altogether from pain and suffering could not be accounted absolutely good if he attained the salvation and perfection of an entire universe at the cost of ten minutes' slight pain to a single sentient creature, since he could, by hypothesis, have attained the same ends without that pain. If, however, the omnipotence of God is at any rate so far limited and conditioned that He cannot contradict Himself, the rough and ready argument which runs, 'If He is Almighty He could alter all this ; and if He is Good He would,' fails to satisfy. It becomes necessary to inquire whether what we desire involved any contradiction. It may well be that the demand we are making of God is not a reasonable one. It may be that even He could not grant our request without denying us something else more precious still. This idea is obviously of the greatest possible importance. It enables us to retain a belief in the goodness and mercy of God, a belief absolutely fundamental to all religion, without surrendering anything of any vital importance. Indeed, in refusing a merely verbal

interpretation of the word omnipotence we gain rather than lose. Dr. M'Taggart offers men the choice between a non-omnipotent God, whose power is limited, and a non-moral one who could do away with all evil but abstains from doing so. But indeed the choice is something rather different. It is a choice between an absolutely omnipotent God of whom nothing could be either said or thought; who could not justly be called Good, since that would limit His power to be evil, nor merciful since that would limit his power to be cruel; nor indeed anything at all of any kind, since any such affirmative would be a denial of His power to be the opposite; and, on the other hand, a God omnipotent in the only sense worth claiming for Him, namely, in the sense that He can do all things which do not run contrary to those laws of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, which are nothing but the expression of His own essential nature. Students of the philosophy of religion will recognise that the choice is the familiar one between the Unconditioned Absolute of Dionysius the Areopagite, Eckhart, and Spinoza, and the God of orthodox theologians. More widely yet, the distinction may be viewed as the distinction between the conception of God entertained in the East and that which the less rigidly logical, but more strongly moral, West has usually accepted. For it cannot be too clearly asserted that a Being to whom nothing is impossible, even if it involves a contradiction, must be one of whom nothing can

be predicted at all, and who therefore can neither be Good, Merciful, Just, or anything else. Emerson has well expressed the impossibility of formulating any definite statement of such a Being in his poem entitled 'Brahma.'

'If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear,
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter, and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on Heaven.'

AN EXAMPLE OF AN ESSENTIALLY IMPOSSIBLE ACTION.—It may help to make the point of view adopted in this chapter somewhat plainer if we take one special example of the sort of action which we may, with due reverence, regard as impossible even to God. Such an example may be found in connection with moral freedom. Since the very nature of virtue is bound up with free choice—

Aristotle defines virtue as a habit of choice—it is clear that where there is no freedom there can be no virtue. This is a truth recognised by all determinists. If there is no free will moral praise and blame become absurd. So then it would seem that even God had to choose between creating a mere machine, a conscious automaton, and creating a free spirit able to choose between good and evil. Nothing perhaps will do more to bring home, to any student of the subject, the nature of God's omnipotence than a careful consideration of the question—Could God create a being which should be truly free and at the same time incapable of sinning? It is not possible, in this place, to consider all that is involved in the question. A great many questions cluster round the central one and will need treatment one by one. But one or two points may be made here and at once. Such are the following:—

(1) A being who possessed no moral freedom would be a mere machine, and so no fitting object for God's love. If God desired an object for His love, a being in whom He could dwell and who could dwell in Him, He could only find it by creating such a being *in His own likeness*, a free spirit.

(2) As the essence of virtue lies in free choice, the idea of any man being *forced* to be good is a contradiction in terms. From the least matter to the greatest it is true that a man cannot be *made* to choose. He may be forced to accept one of two

alternatives, but such acceptance, if the force applied is really such as he could not resist, involves no moral element. If the alternative accepted is the right one, he is nevertheless deserving of no praise and in no sense virtuous. If the alternative is the wrong one, he is nevertheless not blameworthy and there is no element of vice. There must, of course, be real force such as the victim of it is truly incapable of resisting. As Prof. M'Kenzie points out, the apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet* is guilty of confused thinking when he says, 'My poverty and not my will consents.' But in any case, no man can be forced to choose, since the essence of choice is freedom, and the more clearly we think the more clearly we recognise that where there is no freedom there is no choice, and where there is no choice there is no moral goodness or moral badness.

(3) That since any being who was not free would not be a moral being at all, but a mere automaton and so no fit object for God's love; and since no being can be forced to choose, the claim that God ought to compel men to be good, or that He should have prevented the Fall, is an unreasonable claim. For such a claim really amounts to this, that we demand of God that He should at once make us perfectly free and yet compel us to choose this and not that, which is absurd and such a contradiction as must not be demanded of God.

There are, of course, many further questions as to the origin and nature of sin, and its relation to

physical evil, and as to the possibility of its cure, which remain to be settled. But it is something if we recognise that even an omnipotent God could not create free moral beings, fit to be the objects of His love, capable of knowing good and evil, and of choosing freely between them, and yet have prevented them from sinning, or forced them, after sinning, to repent and again choose good. This is not to say either that the Fall—whatever the nature of the Fall may have been—was necessary or that after sin repentance is impossible. But it is an assertion of what I believe to be the truth, namely, that the *possibility* of the Fall was necessary if God chose to create free spirits, and not machines, and that repentance and renewed choice of Good, however much God's grace may assist towards them, must be the free choice of the individual and cannot be compelled even by omnipotence.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE ARGUMENT OF THIS CHAPTER.—If the argument in this chapter is correct, the choice before God, in creating the world, lay between creating a purely mechanical universe peopled with automata, and creating a world of free spiritual beings for whom the choice of evil and not good was at any rate a possibility. To require of God that He should create beings free to choose between good and evil yet obliged to choose good is to ask an impossibility. If an omnipotent God could do such a thing He might still be a God of

perfect wisdom, but the word wisdom as applied to Him would mean something entirely different to what it means when applied to man. Let this point be made quite clear. It would not mean that the wisdom of God is greater than ours. It means that it is something fundamentally different and not inconsistent with what we should call irrationality. But if the wisdom of God is such as not to be incompatible with what we should regard as irrationality and contradiction, why should not the holiness of God be such as is not incompatible with cruelty and falsehood ? But this is a conclusion from which the whole nature of man revolts. If God is to be for us an object of love and worship, His goodness, mercy, and truth may be, and indeed must be, infinitely greater than ours, but they must be, so to speak, of the same stuff. If when I speak of the goodness of God I may be talking all the while of what in man I should call wickedness ; if when I speak of His justice I mean what in man would be injustice ; if when I speak of His mercy I mean what in man would be cruelty, then all speech about God is a vain waste of breath. Here and there men and women may be found with such a passion for self-negation and such a worship of pure power that they are able to worship the idea of such a being. Robert Browning, by a superb *tour de force* of poetic art, has painted such a soul in his poem, 'Johannes Agricola in Meditation.' But I cannot persuade myself that such an attitude of

mind is any more Christian or moral than that of a worshipper of Moloch rejoicing in his idol's lust for human sacrifices. When the heart of man demands that his God should be *good*, the word good must mean the same as it means when he declares of a fellow-man that he is good, and not something totally different. But if this claim of the moral nature of man for a Good God is admitted, I cannot see why the claim of man's intellectual nature for a Rational God is not also to be accepted. I cannot so differentiate between man's intellectual and moral nature as to find a Good God, whose goodness in us would be evil, intolerable and yet a Rational God, whose wisdom in us would be irrationality, tolerable. In neither case do we claim that man's powers are the measure of God's powers. We may surely claim that, being made in God's image, man's powers and qualities are not altogether unlike His.

CHAPTER IV

THE NATURE OF THE WILL

The nature of the Will—The problem: is it worth discussing?—Results of a necessitarian view—Argument from the existence of a moral sense—Causes which have led men to hold necessitarian views—Choice determined by ideal ends—Conception of a 'free choice'—Ethical importance of the idea of ideal ends.

THE NATURE OF THE WILL.—From what has been said so far it is plain that the whole problem of sin and pain turns on the question of the nature of man's will. God is a free spiritual being; has He made man in His own likeness in such a way that man also is possessed of moral freedom? Clearly, if He has done so, God is to a certain extent limited in His omnipotence by His own act. Having created man free, God has certain alternatives. He may annihilate what He has made. Or again, seeing that man is making an evil use of his freedom, He may entirely reverse man's nature, converting him into a perfectly working automaton in place of a sinful spiritual being. Or yet again, He may have long patience, pleading with man, striving to influence him. One thing alone He cannot do: He cannot *make* man *good* against man's will, since

the essence of virtue (moral goodness) is free choice, and to make man good, from the outside as it were, is either a contradiction in terms or a destruction of his nature as a free being. This point is so important that I must elaborate it a little more. When we talk of making a person good we may mean one of two things, namely :—

(1) Making him *be* good, *i.e.* choose good rather than ill. Which is absurd, since to make a person choose is impossible.

(2) Making him act well, *i.e.* perform certain actions in a desired way, as a watchmaker makes a watch keep good time. This has no moral value for the individual so compelled but, on the contrary, is a destruction of his true nature as a free being, able to choose between good and evil.

This point is extremely well made by the writer who passes under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, when he says in his Treatise on Divine Names, 'Wherefore we will not admit the vain statement of the multitude, who say that Providence ought to lead us to virtue, even against our own will. For *to destroy nature* is not a function of Providence.'

God, then, by creating free spiritual beings may be said to limit His own omnipotence. Yet such limitation is only such as we may believe to be inherent in His own nature as perfect wisdom, goodness, and beauty, since He is only restrained from doing what would be a contradiction. He can, if He wills it, annihilate the human race. Faith

leads us to believe that, by long patience, and infinite mercy and love, He can in the end overcome evil and lead men, by the bonds of love, freely to choose good. Only one thing we must not ask of Him, and that is that He should create free beings incapable of free choice. The crux, then, of the problem lies in the nature of man's will and the possibility of free choice. Is man a free agent? To that question we must now address ourselves.

THE PROBLEM: IS IT WORTH DISCUSSING?—There is perhaps no problem upon which more has been written, or which has come to be regarded as more hopeless or more dull, than the problem of the freedom or otherwise of the human will. And many readers will be inclined to doubt the use of attacking the problem again. And others will be deterred by what they have heard of the dulness and tediousness of the matter. Now as to the value of reopening the question, it is enough to say that a short review of some of the arguments is absolutely necessary to our present inquiry. And as to the tedious nature of the question, it will be enough at this stage to remark that every question is dull to the man who does not happen to be interested in it and delightful to the man who is interested. Golf shop, gardening details, fine points of play in bridge, niceties of chess problems, all these are deeply absorbing or profoundly tedious to a man according to his interest or lack of interest

in the questions discussed. The question as to whether man is or is not a free agent *can* be simply stated, and the arguments for it and against it clearly set forth. And considering the issues involved it certainly ought to prove interesting to any intelligent man or woman.

THE PROBLEM STATED.—Clearly the first thing necessary is to get a distinct understanding of what the question under discussion really is. Perhaps the best way to get such a distinct understanding will be by considering first of all a case where free will certainly does not enter. I look out of my window and see a piece of paper blowing about in the street. *Where will it be in an hour's time?* It may be blown into the gutter, caught in the flow of water rushing down it, and be carried through the grating at the corner of the street, and so into the drains. Again, it may be blown into the fire which some men working on a paving job have kindled in a brazier before their shelter, and may be burnt. Or one of the men may pick it up, fold it, and use it as a wedge to stop the window of the shelter rattling in the wind at nights. Or the wind may carry it up into the telegraph wires where it may hang for weeks. Or any one of a thousand and one other things may happen to it. Now no one pretends that, in the present state of our knowledge, or perhaps in any state of knowledge to which man is ever likely to attain, it would be

possible to predict the future movements of that piece of paper with absolute mathematical certainty. Yet, if the ordinary view of the mechanical universe which is common to-day be true, a being of infinite cleverness, and gifted with perfect powers of mathematical analysis, should be able to predict the future movements of that piece of paper with the same accuracy and certainty with which the Astronomer Royal predicts the future movements of the satellites of the planet Jupiter. The problem is of course infinitely more difficult, but it is of the same order of difficulty and of the same nature.

The factors of the problem are (1) the nature of the paper, its weight, size, amount of surface exposed to the action of the wind, capacity for absorbing moisture or for resisting damp, etc. etc., and (2) the environment of the paper, the force of the wind, depth of the gutter, amount of water flowing in the gutter, distance between the bars of the gutter grating, position of the workmen's fire, etc. etc. But there is one factor which no one supposes will enter into the problem. No one supposes that the final result will be affected by any likes or dislikes of the paper itself. Its end will be in no way affected by its own choice. Now the question of whether man has or has not free will turns on just this question. *Is his action at any given moment determined by the interaction of two sets of forces, unknown and perhaps to us unknowable yet at any moment perfectly fixed, definite, and finite, which*

we may describe as his nature and his environment; or are there alternative courses between which he chooses freely? To this question the Libertarian, or believer in free will, replies, 'There are usually, probably always, alternative courses of action between which a man chooses freely.' The Necessitarian, or disbeliever in free will, on the other hand, declares that there is really but one possible result of the reaction between a man's character and his environment; the feeling of freedom to choose between competing courses is a delusion, and at any moment a man, being the man he is and being in the particular circumstances in which he finds himself, has but one possible course of action, and can act in but one possible way. Our ignorance of a man's character and of the reaction on that character of his environment may, says the necessitarian, prevent our predicting the result, but, for all that, the forces at work are fixed, finite, and definite, and the result is therefore determined and, to infinite knowledge, determinable beforehand. And this which is claimed by the necessitarian as true of each individual act of so-called choice is of course to be regarded as true of the entire universe. If, at any moment of time, our supposed celestial mathematician had known the size, nature, and position of all masses of matter in the universe, and of the forces of material attraction and repulsion acting on them, he could by an elaborate but wholly natural mathematical calculation have deduced

the entire history of the universe backward or forward to any point of time.

Results of a Necessitarian View.—Now the results of such a view are obviously important. How important they are is, however, not always recognised. It may be as well to consider one or two of those results at once. The first and most important is that the ideas of 'Right' and 'Wrong' cease to have any meaning. People may assert that, when my actions are as absolutely fixed and determined as the movements of the pendulum of a clock, I still *ought* to do this and not that, but as a moral judgment the assertion is quite meaningless. They can only mean—as they might mean when they said that a faulty clock ought to keep better time—that some person or persons would find it more convenient if I did. But that is not a moral judgment, it is a mere statement of fact which carries with it neither praise or blame. A man who habitually speaks the truth may be a more convenient man to have as a confidential clerk than a man who habitually tells lies. So a length of copper wire may be more convenient to an electrician than an equal length of hemp rope, because the former is a better conductor of electricity. But there is no question of moral praise or blame as between copper wire and hemp rope, and if the electrician were to begin working himself up into a fine heat of moral enthusiasm about the matter he

would merely prove himself an ass. So too, if all our actions are determined for us, no one action can be any better or any worse morally than any other and moral praise or blame is an absurdity.

Of course, a necessitarian may still logically pass judgments of utility on actions or characters. He may say of lies, as he might say of corns, that they will almost certainly prove inconvenient, and are therefore undesirable. He may say of cowardice, as he might say of a weak heart or short sight, that it is likely to be a great hindrance to a man's career. It is only moral judgments which he cannot logically indulge in. It is only praise and blame that he must abstain from.

A second result, closely allied to the one we have just been considering, is that no one who accepts the necessitarian position has any right to look for improvement in his own or any one else's character. Finding himself, or any one he is interested in, possessed of a character which is weak, cowardly, cruel, violent, self-indulgent or untruthful, the believer in free will may hope for improvement, since each act affects the character by a process of reaction, so that a steady effort after what is noble may make the coward brave, the cruel gentle, and the self-indulgent self-restrained. But any such hope, whether for himself or for any other person, is absurd for a necessitarian. It is, of course, remotely possible that the result of his actions may be improvement. A man's character may auto-

matically improve with use as a violin is said to improve by being played on. On the other hand, a man's character may deteriorate by use as an electric light bulb gradually grows dimmer and less useful with constant use. And on the whole, since a bad character tends to produce bad actions, and bad actions tend to a further deterioration of character, the necessitarian will probably be wise to expect that good men (useful men would be a more logical expression in his mouth) will go on getting better and better (more and more useful) with age and bad men (faulty, useless or unserviceable men) will go from bad to worse. One thing alone is certain. Whatever will be will be, and whatever will be was settled and determined from the beginning of time and is quite unalterable and nobody's fault.

Argument from the Existence of a Moral Sense.—Now nothing is more certain than that the frame of mind which has been described as logically suitable for the necessitarian is entirely foreign, not merely to the plain man, but also to the convinced necessitarian himself, directly he forgets his own theories. Nothing is more instinctive than the moral judgments we pass in praising or blaming. It may be, it certainly is, true that standards of judgment vary, and that a truly Christian Englishman will praise what a Red Indian in a state of nature might blame, and *vice versâ*. But that is not the

point. The important thing is that all men tend to regard some actions as morally good and others as morally bad, which seems to establish the existence of a moral sense. True, that sense may be trained and cultivated, or again vitiated and corrupted, so that men's judgments on moral points will vary. But still it is true that men do continually and universally pass judgments which are not judgments of utility but true moral judgments. There is nothing that seems more clearly a fact of experience than that men do pass judgments which have nothing to do with utility. When a man praises an act as good he is not saying that it will turn out to be useful; he is appealing to a distinct standard of values. He is delivering a moral judgment. Equally when he declares a thing to be beautiful, he is making no assertion as to utility. He is delivering an aesthetic judgment. And all attempts to reduce these three standards of value to a common denomination appear to fail utterly. When it has been freely granted that it is not always easy to classify any particular judgment as aesthetic rather than moral, or moral rather than utilitarian, and when it is also freely admitted that among savage nations these three standards of value often coalesce and cannot be disentangled (as for instance in the Polynesian Taboo, which is simply an assertion that something *must not be done*, and which seems to contain a religious, a moral, an aesthetic, and an utilitarian element and to be now predominantly

one and now another, and again at times all four together in an undifferentiated state), it is nevertheless true that they are actually distinct. But if there is no freedom of the will the moral sense, on which the moral judgment depends and of which it is the expression, is a complete delusion. Now of course this is possible. Man may judge this to be virtuous and that to be vicious, whereas there is nothing in reality which corresponds with these distinctions. But equally man may judge that two and two make four and that the whole is greater than its part, while as a matter of fact the whole universe in which he lives is radically irrational and there is no objective standard of truth or of reason. But few people are prepared to adopt a position of such thorough-going scepticism. When a thing is, as they say, self-evidently true they accept it. Why then should the moral consciousness be considered less deserving of attention? If, in reply to this question, we are met with the answer that the moral and the aesthetic consciousness of man cannot rank with his intellect because there is no such general agreement about what is good, or what is beautiful, as there is about what is true, we may make a twofold reply. First, it is a very disputable point indeed whether there is any more general agreement, outside a small circle of very abstract truths, as to what is true than there is as to what is good or what is virtuous. And secondly, the agreement we seek is not that this is good or that

is good, this evil or that evil, but that *there is a distinction between good and evil.* And that there is such a distinction is a belief than which perhaps none is more universally found among men. But it is also a belief which is a pure delusion unless man possesses moral freedom. The very general, not to say universal, habit of passing moral judgments is therefore very strong evidence of the freedom of the will. The fact that, in his unreflective moments, the most convinced necessitarian believes, and acts on the belief, that he can choose freely between competing lines of action is another. It remains therefore to ask why the freedom of the will has ever been denied.

CAUSES WHICH HAVE LED MEN TO HOLD NECESSITARIAN VIEWS.—A great impetus has been given to necessitarian opinions by the attention paid to physical science. Material objects are always found to act under the influence of external causes. If an apple falls from a tree, it does so because of the attraction of the earth ; if ice melts, it does so because of the heat of the sun ; if trees rock themselves, they do so because of the force of the wind. That every effect should have a cause became therefore one of the axioms of science. And a cause was always regarded as something external to, and other than, the thing acted on. That a thing should be ' self-determined ' was abhorrent to the scientific mind. Having observed the way in which inanimate

objects acted, the man of science has decided that spiritual beings must necessarily act in the same way. But in so deciding the man of science merely reversed the fallacy of the savage who, finding that he himself was influenced by love, and hate, and fear, and desire, gave to the rocks and streams and trees a character like his own, and supposed them to be sentient beings like himself. And really the animism of the primitive savage seems no more, and no less, unscientific, and no more and no less reasonable, than the mechanicalism of the materialistic man of science. Each shuts his eyes to one part of his experience and generalises from the other. The man of science assures us that a free spiritual being *must* behave as a material object would do, and we are overwhelmed in discussions on free will and necessity with illustrations drawn from guns and boots and falling weights. The savage assumes that rocks and streams and trees must behave like sentient creatures, and peoples them all with spirits as unstable and capricious as himself. Neither suggestion is based on a truly scientific method. The only way of determining how anything, spiritual being or material particle, will act under given circumstances is to watch it. Let us watch a mind at work.

Choice Determined by Ideal Ends.—At the present moment I am writing this chapter at a table by the fire in my study. I may go on writing it.

But there are two letters which must go off before midnight. My writing desk stands open at the other end of the room. I may get up, go across the room and write them. Again, at the other side of the fire is a very comfortable sofa, a new novel by one of my favourite writers, and plenty of tobacco. I may lie down and read for an hour and a half before bedtime. There are other and more remote alternatives. I promised to slip in some night and smoke with my friend the doctor, and hear his views of the Insurance Act. Or I might have a final go at the parish accounts. The determinist would say that these various desires are the various forces acting on my mind, and that though I delude myself with the belief that I am free to choose, yet, being the man I am, the result is really quite fixed and certain. The strongest desire will prevail. If I go on writing, leaving the letters till to-morrow and letting the pipe and novel, the doctor and his chat, and the parish accounts wait, it is because my interest in the subject of which I am writing, and my desire to prove the determinist wrong, is stronger than any other desire. And so I go on writing and, by yielding to the strongest desire, *prove the determinist right all the time.*

But we are not without our answer to the determinist. And first of all it may be noted that, though he talks of the most powerful motive always prevailing, he is quite unable to say what he means by the most powerful motive. When a number

of forces are considered in a problem of mechanics it is quite a simple matter to determine which are more and which are less powerful. The gravitational pull of a weight of ten pounds is always greater than that of one of eight pounds and less than that of one of twelve. But no such simple statement is possible when estimating motives. When he declares a particular motive to be the stronger he does not mean that I feel it to be the stronger, for after continuing to write this chapter, I may say with truth, I felt far more inclined to have a quiet read and smoke. If, on the other hand, he disregards my feelings altogether, and attempts to draw up a scale of motives in the order of their strength which shall be independent of my or of any man's feelings, he will be met with yet greater difficulties. For of six motives all acting together any one may prove the strongest to-day and any other the day after. Or one may prove the strongest with one man and another with another. No possible classification can be suggested which shall determine which is the stronger of two motives. The determinist sometimes takes refuge in declaring that a motive is proved to be the stronger by the fact of its showing itself effective in competition with others. But that reduces the determinist's position to the following not very valuable pair of assertions.

(1) A man's action is determined, at any moment, by the strongest motive acting on him.

(2) What is the strongest motive? The one by which he is determined.

As a matter of fact, however, a man's actions are determined by what we may call ideal ends. If I had nothing but the present to consider I should certainly go on to the sofa and smoke. But I picture my vexation, a few months hence, when the manuscript of this book, already overdue, is being asked for by the publishers and I remember with regret how I let this time of comparative freedom from other work slip by me unused. Along with that I picture the pleasure of getting one more chapter done, and getting on to the next chapter which interests me more. Next I picture my two correspondents looking for their letters, and my own trouble and annoyance at having to go out early to-morrow and telegraph. And against that I set the trouble of looking out one or two documents the exact place of which in my desk I am uncertain about. As to the smoking and novel reading I know that they would be pleasant now, but I bring up before my mind a picture of myself going to bed regretting the waste of a long quiet evening. The doctor is a charming fellow, and his wife encourages us to smoke in the drawing-room. But if the doctor once gets on the subject of the Insurance Act I shall be bored to death and probably shan't get away till past twelve. And so on, and so on.

Now be it noticed that these pictures of myself as satisfied with an evening's good work, or bored

with uncongenial talk, or vexed with a valuable evening frittered away over a novel, are pictures of the future. They are things as yet merely ideal and not absolutely existing. And here we get one great distinction between the way in which mechanical action is determined and the way in which a free spirit acts. The apple when it falls is moved by forces which are acting on it at the time, not by forces which may be conceived as likely to act on it a month hence. It may be said that the motives which influence a man's choice are actually present to his mind. The motives! Yes; but what are the motives? The motives are the ideas of things *not* present, the idea of satisfaction at good work done, the idea of future trouble and worry at work neglected, the idea of boredom at a tedious discussion. Now, surely it is in the highest degree unscientific to maintain that the behaviour of a material particle under the action of fixed and definite forces acting on it *must* be a complete and adequate analogy for the action of a free spirit under the action of the ideas of future states of mind; states of mind, be it remembered, which because they are ideal and not yet realised are indefinite in number and quality.

This introduces us to a second difference between a free spirit deliberating and a material particle acted on by forces. The forces acting at any moment on a particle are fixed and definite, and the particle has no power to vary them. The ideal

ends which I can present to myself are infinite in number and quality. If my pipe and sofa 'draw me,' as the saying goes, I can strengthen the other alternative by reminding myself of my promise to a friend to let him have the first four chapters by a certain date. I can remind myself that the novel will be all the pleasanter if read a few chapters at a time after dinner daily. I can brighten up the picture of one ideal end and tone down the picture of another. Or, on the other hand, I can refuse to dwell on the unpleasant consequences of what I desire to do, and banish the thought of my obligations to get the book written.

To all this the necessitarian may reply, 'Your whole description is a complete begging of the question. You assume that you can increase the force of one motive and decrease the force of another at will, but you do not prove it, and you still leave us with no explanation of why in the end you choose one ideal end rather than another. Can there be any answer except that you are inevitably attracted by the strongest desire even as a fragment of steel, placed between two magnets, is attracted by the stronger? And can you claim for the mind any greater freedom than for the piece of steel?'

To this I reply that what I have written above is not a begging of any question but simply an attempt to describe, accurately and without bias, what seems to be happening in a mind engaged in choosing. As a matter of fact, I find myself parading before

the mind a number of ideal ends or aims, the number of which it is possible for me to multiply indefinitely. As a matter of fact, I find (or believe that I find) myself able to give increased weight and value to one end and decreased weight and value to others. As a matter of fact, I find myself choosing one out of many possible ends and I can offer no explanation of that choice except that I did choose so to act. My determinist friend may ask, 'But *why* did you choose this and not that?' But it is then he that begs the question, for his words mean no more and no less than, 'What *made* you choose this and not that? What determined your choice?' And to ask that is to beg the whole question at issue in favour of a determinist and necessitarian answer. The only answer the libertarian can give is to say, 'Nothing (no-*thing*) made me choose as I did. *I* chose freely. I was not without reasons. But there were reasons on both sides and I chose freely between them.' To reply, as the determinist does, that there must be some cause other than man's own free choice and that a man must be ruled by the strongest motive is useless and unsatisfactory for two reasons, namely, (1) because it is a mere dogmatic assertion based on the idea that it must be possible to bring the mind and its working under the same categories as matter and its working, and (2) because the determinist is unable, as has been shown, to attach any meaning to the word 'strongest' other than 'the motive which ultimately

prevails,' which reduces his proposition to the tautology 'that motive will prevail which is the one which will prevail.'

Conception of a 'Free Choice.'—I had a letter the other day from a young man who wrote, 'You speak of free choice, but that is just what I cannot understand. I cannot *conceive* of a free choice.' Here, however, he was quite wrong. What he ought to have said was that he could not *explain* free choice by bringing it under any more general law and describing it in terms of something other than itself. For choosing, like knowing and loving, is a simple elementary activity of spirit which must be experienced to be known, and which when known in experience cannot be analysed into anything simpler. An illustration may make things clear. Suppose a being from Mars were to land on this earth, a being perfectly intellectual but without power to love or hate, like or dislike. If a man said to him, 'I love my wife above every other woman,' the Martian might reply, 'What do you mean by love? Do you mean that you judge her to be larger, or more brightly coloured, or more able to earn money at a mangle, than any other woman?' The man would repudiate any such suggestion. The Martian would insist that what the man called love must really be some sort of judgment of the intellect, and would point out that the man commended his wife's playing, and her tact in dealing

with a tiresome sister-in-law, and her good cooking. The man would not deny these intellectual judgments, and might admit that they were among the causes of his love for his wife. But he would say that his love was something *other than any judgment of the intellect and not to be explained by any such.* The Martian would be incapable of knowing what love is because he could not experience it. So when a young man says he cannot conceive of a free will he may be invited to say whether he will have tea or coffee. If he says he will take tea because, though he prefers coffee, he finds it keeps him awake, he may be further invited to do a little psychological work on his own account and to observe that he has done something, namely 'chosen' tea, which is quite distinct from knowing (for he has known that coffee kept him awake, and that tea didn't, on other occasions and yet chosen coffee), and also quite distinct from loving or liking (for he still likes coffee better than tea). He has in fact exercised a spontaneous power of a spiritual being and performed an act of will. He may of course still maintain that his will is wholly determined by his intellect (in his case by the knowledge that coffee keeps him awake) or by his likes and dislikes (in this case by his preference for a night's sleep as compared to the pleasure of drinking a cup of coffee). But any psychologist will assure him that there is quite as much to be said for the view that a man's knowledge is conditioned by his likes, or his

likes by his will. Knowledge, affection, and choice are, in short, three aspects or elements of a mental act which are never found wholly separated, but which again cannot be resolved into one another. They must be experienced to be known, and nothing is gained by trying to bring them under the categories of physical science.

Ethical Importance of the Idea of Ideal Ends.—We have still some questions in connection with the freedom of the will which must be considered. But they may be deferred to the next chapter. The present rather lengthy chapter may be brought to an end by pointing out the moral value and importance of the view that action is determined by ideal ends. Indeed, unless conduct is determined by the idea of an end aimed at, moral judgments are impossible or absurd. If I know myself to be a coward, or cruel, or vicious, and aim at an ideal end, namely, a character which shall in time be brave, gentle, and pure, then this ideal end may enable me to overcome strong inclinations in other directions. And so in the end I may become what I desire. A famous breeder of prize sheep is said to have remarked to a friend, 'Chalk on that wall a picture of your ideal sheep, and in a few years of selection and breeding I will produce it for you.' So the man who recognises that conduct is determined by ideal ends might say, 'Let me sketch in my mind's eye the sort of man I desire to be, and in

a sufficiently long series of years of struggle and effort I will become such a man.' It is true of course that, without the help of the grace of God, he may be powerless to attain the ideal end, or even to desire to do so, since it is 'God that worketh in us both to will and to do.' But, leaving for the present all question of the help God may give us by His grace, it is clear that if conduct is determined by ideal ends man is seen to be in a measure a self-creating being. God supplies the power and suggests the right end; but *I* choose what the end shall be; and to the man who says, 'If God made you, He is responsible for your actions, good or bad, and the idea of sin is absurd,' I reply, 'God did not make me. I made myself. I am a self-creating being. God supplied the power, but, when He gave me free will, He left me to decide what manner of man I should become. And my success or failure is in my own hands, and I am responsible for the result.'

CHAPTER V

THE ARGUMENT OF THE LAST CHAPTER EXAMINED

Some difficulties to be considered—Twofold answer to this objection—Logical outcome of epi-phenomenalism—The determinism of the idealist—Character—A 'universe of effective desire'—The goal of perfection—The conclusions arrived at as to Free Will.

SOME DIFFICULTIES TO BE CONSIDERED.—In the present chapter we have to consider one or two difficulties which may be advanced against the view of Free Will set out in Chapter IV. They are of two kinds, those which spring from its seeming lawlessness and incompatibility with the universal reign of Natural Law, and those which spring from its apparent failure to allow for the effects of Character as a factor in determining human actions. We will briefly examine these difficulties, beginning with the question of free will and natural law.

FREE WILL AND THE REIGN OF NATURAL LAW.—It may be asked,—What place has this unconditioned, or at least self-conditioned free will, seemingly so irresponsible and anarchic, in a universe ruled by natural law, a universe in which every

effect has its cause, and where the whole is to be conceived as a great machine whose very existence depends on the most perfect intercorrelation of parts. The introduction of the conception of anything so lawless and irresponsible into the orderly working of nature is as repulsive to the mind of the true philosopher as it would be to a watchmaker to regard the mainspring of a watch as something which might be expected to 'do as it chose,' or to an astronomer to work with a telescope, the driving machinery of which had likes and dislikes, and hurried over some parts of the heavens and dawdled over others. Such a watch, such a telescope, would render scientific work impossible. Does not the admission of the existence of free will render the very conception of a rational universe impossible? Need we wonder that Isaac Newton looked forward to the possibility of deducing all the phenomena of nature from mechanical principles, or that Huxley declared that modern views of the universe contended for 'the gradual banishment from all regions of human thought of what we call spirit and spontaneity.' The intrusion of free will into an orderly universe of mechanically correlated causes and effects seems to make for nothing but disorder.

Twofold Answer to this Objection.—Now to this objection there is a twofold answer. First of all we may observe that this disorderly and unaccountable factor is, as a matter of fact, exactly

what we do meet with in daily life. The most careful and accurate calculations may be completely upset, when it comes to putting them into practice, because of the caprice of some human being. 'I did my best,' says the man who made the calculations, 'and I thought I had allowed for every possible contingency. But you can't count on what such a fellow as so-and-so will do.' Now it is all very well for the determinist to argue that if our psychology and physiology were perfect we should be able to reduce human conduct to fixed laws, and to make the future actions of individuals as much a matter of calculation as the movements of the planets. That being a mere dogmatic assertion advanced without proof, and indeed incapable of proof, it may be allowed to pass. It is enough to reply that when this advance in physiology and psychology is effected we will believe in it. For the present we may safely assert that the ordinary work-a-day attitude of mind (the attitude of mind, that is to say, of every man, even of a philosopher, when not engaged in theorising) is against the possibility of such an advance in science. And also we may assert that, on the whole, even philosophic thought is to-day much more disinclined to expect advance in that direction than it was some quarter of a century ago.

There is, however, a more weighty answer than this that can be urged against the determinist. He says that the existence of free will is incompatible

with that logical, orderly, and rational system which is secured by a purely mechanical explanation of the world. But is there such a logical, orderly, and rational system? Or, if it has to be admitted that no mechanical explanation of the universe is as yet to hand, complete and perfect, does there seem to be a promise of any such explanation? If, in deference to the demands of the man whom, for convenience of reference, we may call the mechanist—the man, that is to say, who believes that all the phenomena of nature are mechanically determined so that 'the universe is a system of forces, or of matter and energy, in which every event or process is completely determined or caused by antecedent physical process according to the laws of mechanism'—we surrender free will, and admit that all actions are mechanically determined, and that moral freedom is a delusion, will that satisfy him? No indeed. The next requirement of this all-devouring mechanistic theory is that we should throw over all consciousness. For what, if this theory is accepted, is to be said of the relationship of mind and body? There are many forms of the answers to this question but they all agree in one thing, namely, that they *all deny that our mental processes can have any effect on our actions at all.* The best known form of the answer to our question is that, due chiefly to the late Professor Huxley, in which mind is described as an epiphenomenon of physical processes. An illustration

will make this theory clear to the ordinary reader. Suppose that in your sitting-room there is a large mirror over the mantelpiece. Every single action that happens in your room is reflected in that mirror. But those actions are not caused, or in any way affected, by the reflections in the mirror. The mirror reflects; that is all. It plays no part in the chain of cause and effect which links together the various events in the room. You come in feeling cold, you draw a chair up to the fire; your eye catches sight of the evening paper, and you pick it up; you find the light poor and switch on the electric light; the fire scorches you, and you push back your chair; the warmth makes you drowsy and you fall asleep; the clock strikes, and you wake. Your every movement is reflected in the mirror, but the mirror is the cause of none of them. You would have acted no differently if it had not been there. As the mirror is to the room, and all that goes on in it, so is the mind, according to the epi-phenomenalist theory, to the life of man and all that he does. It reflects, but it does not cause; it is a mirror of his actions, but in no sense a cause of any of them. It is, as the word epi-phenomenon suggests, something over, a by-product. Indeed, the mirror has an advantage over the mind, for the mirror may sometimes cause an action to take place in the room—as when you look into the mirror to straighten your tie, or hold up a copy of *Alice Through the Looking-glass* to read the first

verse of Jabberwockie—but the mind must never be conceived as affecting man's action. To admit that any mental process of man, any thought, desire or act of will, could be the cause of any action would be fatal to the entire mechanistic theory. It is of course hard to believe that any sane man has ever really held such a theory. And of course in everyday life no one ever does hold it, in the sense of believing it and acting on it. But it is gravely taught in text-books of psychology and psycho-physics and is absolutely necessary to that mechanistic theory which is one of the chief obstacles in the way of a general acceptance of free will.

Logical Outcome of Epi-Phenomenalism.—It may be worth while to look a little closer into this question of epi-phenomenalism and to see what are its results. Consider the statement made in the last paragraph that if the mirror had not been there it would have made no difference in your actions. Clearly this is so. If it is in no sense the cause of your actions and, while reflecting them, exercises no kind of influence on them, then its absence would produce no sort of change. Everything would go on after its removal, and would have gone on from the first if it had never been there at all, precisely the same. If then we claim that man's whole mental process is a mere reflection of his mechanically caused actions, we are clearly justified in asserting that it would have made not

the slightest difference if man had been an unconscious automaton and human consciousness had never developed. If man had never developed any consciousness at all, St. Peter's at Rome would still have been built, and unconscious automata would have said Mass in it, and confessed their sins and sung praises *all with no consciousness of what they were doing*. Shakespeare (or Bacon) would have made black marks on paper without the possibility of meaning anything by them, and three hundred years later an unconscious Irving would have been stimulated by those black marks (or others like them, which other unconscious automata had produced in unconscious imitation of them) and would have run about on the stage of the Lyceum making strange noises before an audience who would clap hands and laugh and cry without any consciousness of what they were doing. Nay, more. An automatic Huxley would have committed to paper a theory of epi-phenomenalism, without of course any consciousness of what he was doing, and I, equally unconscious, should have written a book to refute it. There is nothing impossible in the suggestion that man might have evolved without developing consciousness. All the marvels of plant-life have developed without, as far as we are able to judge, any conscious activity on the plants' part, and there are instinctive actions in animals—such as the migrations of birds and of fish—which seem inexplicable on

any theory of consciousness. But can we believe that those activities of man which *have a meaning*, such as the production of a work of art, the expression of religious emotions in suitable actions, or the conduct of a scientific or philosophic discussion, could have pursued exactly the same course that they have done if man had never developed consciousness? Yet if we decide that these things could not have had the results that they have had, we decide against the mechanistic theory of the universe. Let me put my argument shortly—

(1) *If consciousness plays no causal part in the scheme of things, the Shakespearean plays would have been written, read, acted, and criticised, entirely as they have actually been even if man had never developed consciousness but had evolved as an unconscious automaton. For to deny this is to assert that consciousness has played a causal part in the world.*

(2) *If consciousness does play a causal part in the scheme of things, the mechanistic explanation of the universe must be surrendered.*

It may be objected that there are other difficulties in the way of accepting the freedom of the will besides the mechanistic conception of the universe, and that there are many people who reject epiphenomenalism who are unable to believe in free will. That is true. Yet I am quite unable to recognise the logic of their position. The spiritual

nature of man is not a composite thing in which his will, his affections and his intellect are bound up like three sticks tied together to make a faggot. Man's spiritual nature is a unity which knows, loves and chooses, and which does these things in such a way that there is no act of knowledge wholly divorced from liking or disliking, choosing or rejecting, and no act of liking or disliking which is wholly divorced from knowing and choosing, and no act of choice wholly divorced from knowing and liking. And it is surely wholly unreasonable to regard a man's intellect and his affections as operative factors in his actions while allowing to his choice no causal effect at all.

THE DETERMINISM OF THE IDEALIST.—It is not, however, merely the mechanist who regards free will as something lawless and anarchic, and therefore out of place in an orderly universe. The most thorough-going idealism may, and often does, issue in the most complete determinism, and when all mechanical explanations are rejected we may still find ourselves baulked of spiritual freedom. For whether the universe be regarded as a mechanical system of mass-points acting on one another according to mechanical laws, or as a spiritual system, still, for an intellect fully informed as to the facts and reasoning correctly, there cannot, it would seem, be more than one conclusion. Two beings, that is to say, cannot arrive at different conclusions

and both be right. *The exercise of the intelligence seems therefore not to be free but to be conditioned by the actual facts. We must accept truth when we see it.* So too it would seem (though this is probably less self-evident and certainly less widely admitted) that alike in moral and aesthetic questions a spiritual being, fully informed as to the facts and judging correctly, can only arrive at one conclusion. Two persons, one of whom declares that a particular work of art is lovely and another that it is hideous, one of whom declares a particular action virtuous and another who declares it vicious, cannot both be right. Tastes, moral and aesthetic, may differ, but, unless morality is a delusion and art a mere matter of irrational liking and disliking, we ought to be able to say that *the exercise of the affections is not free but conditioned by the actual facts. We needs must love the highest when we see it.* And if we accept these conclusions as to the intellect and the affections, must we not also go on to the same position as to the will, and say that the exercise of the will is not free but wholly conditioned by the actual facts, so that there is at any time but one possible course of action? Must we not say, 'Being the man I am, with such and such sources of information and an intellect with definite limits of power and training, there is but one conclusion I can arrive at on any question, though if I knew more and were cleverer I might think differently. And being the man I am, with such and such a moral

and aesthetic equipment and training, I prefer Beethoven to Mendelssohn on the one hand and to Strauss on the other; and I am attracted by the standard of the English gentleman as compared with that of an Indian brave at the stake on the one hand or a Buddhist monk on the other; though if I knew more and were better trained I might see that Strauss transcends Beethoven and the Buddhist monk has a nobler ethic than the fox-hunting country gentleman. And finally, being the man I am I cannot help choosing this line of action and rejecting that, though, if I were different, knowing more, judging more correctly, and with better taste, I might act differently?' If we say Yes to this threefold question, have we not lost all the ground we seemed to have gained, and become again entangled in thorough-going Determinism? Clearly we must consider the part played by character.

CHARACTER.—As was suggested in the opening paragraph of this chapter, the part played by character is a most important point in all discussions of free will. To maintain that man's actions are in no sense determined by his character and past actions is absurd and contrary to daily experience. As a matter of fact, a man who has been a strenuous teetotal advocate for forty years is not as likely to get drunk as one who has been drunk twice a week for years. There is a sense in which we can say that the teetotaller is as free to get drunk as

the drunkard. We mean that there is no external restraint. But we must not ignore something which does hold him back, namely his character. And that character is evidently largely the result of his past actions, and his present actions are strengthening and consolidating his character, and we cannot safely ignore it. Yet if we allow any influence to character, where shall we logically stop short of entire determination by character. But determination by character seems indistinguishable from pure mechanical determinism, and to leave no room for moral responsibility, and consequently none for morality itself. As it was crudely put by a working man, 'Iron is hard; lead is soft. You don't praise iron and blame lead. One man is brave, and another is a coward. You should not praise one or blame the other.'

A Universe of Effective Desire.—Let us here, as always, turn to actual observation. How does character act in our own experience of it? I find, on interrogating my consciousness, that there are various kinds and degrees of the possible and the impossible. There are physical impossibilities; I can't jump over a house nor lift a ton weight. There are moral impossibilities; I shrink back with horror from the thought of murder. There are intellectual impossibilities; I cannot preach a sermon in Russian because I don't know a word of it. But there are other things which are neither morally,

physically, nor intellectually impossible, which I nevertheless find quite impossible *for me*. Thus I know of nothing that renders it, in one sense of the word, impossible for me to resign my living and go out to Western Canada as a farmer. But I know it is, in another sense of the word, quite impossible. If invited to discuss it, I should reply, 'Let us talk about possibilities. That is out of the question.' Now here I think we may profitably introduce the idea of what I venture to call the 'universe of effective desire.' I borrow the term from the logician's use of the phrase 'universe of discourse' as the whole content of a man's mind at a given time. If a surgeon, discussing a case of cancer, says positively, 'You may take it from me the knife is absolutely useless,' he does not mean to deny the value of the knife as an instrument for cutting bread and cheese or pruning roses. Those subjects do not fall within his universe of discourse. At any moment his universe of discourse may change so as to include them. He may be invited to take a little lunch, or while waiting the arrival of a second consulting physician he and his host may stroll in the garden and talk roses. But for the time being his universe of discourse is limited, so as to exclude dinner knives and pruning knives. He is thinking only of surgery. Now we may well recognise a similar 'universe of effective desire.' By effective desire I do not mean that the desire will be gratified; I only mean that its gratification

can be willed. To jump over a house, or preach a sermon in a language I don't know a word of, are not things I can in any sense will to do. To beat my opponent at lawn-tennis is a thing I can and do will, even though, as it happens in the end, he beats me. Now what determines what I can will? What, that is to say, determines the limits of my universe of effective desire? The answer is, 'My character, physical, mental, and moral, as that character has been built up by my past acts.' Now my universe of effective desire, though it hardly shifts and varies as rapidly and completely as a man's universe of discourse, yet does vary. A month's steady training may make that physically possible (say the running of a mile under five minutes) which is now impossible. A few years' study might make me able to preach in a language I now know nothing of. A longer or shorter period of earnest and religious living will cure faults now seemingly incurable, and a longer or shorter period of loose and careless living will render vices possible which to-day may excite horror and loathing. The reading of a book which overthrows a man's faith may make the prospect of farming in Canada a welcome change from preaching a Gospel he no longer believes in. And what is a sudden and instantaneous conversion but a sudden, complete, and cataclysmic alteration in the whole nature and content of his universe of effective desire? Such a man may still feel the old tempta-

tions and physical promptings, but their gratification has become impossible to him. Old things have passed away; all things have become new.

Now, the important thing is this. Though a man's character determines his universe of effective desire, so that some things, falling outside that universe, may truly be said to be impossible for him, yet there always seems to me to be within the limits of that universe a choice between a better and a worse, a this and a that. Doubtless too each choice in turn modifies the nature and content of my universe of effective desire so that that universe to-day is not the same as it would have been if yesterday I had chosen differently. Yet still a certain freedom remains. And the important thing is this, namely, that a man can knowingly and freely alter and modify his universe so that, always within limits, he can say, 'What to-day is physically, intellectually, or morally impossible to me shall, this time next year, be possible.' In so doing he is determined by an ideal end, the idea of himself as physically fit and able to run a mile, or intellectually equipped and able to make a speech in Russian, or morally improved and able to control his temper. In short, I believe it is true to say that 'I am what I am, but I can be what I choose,' and to claim for man that he is essentially a self-creating animal. And that is all that is necessary for morals. And nothing less than that appears to me to be adequate to the explanation of our experience.

THE GOAL OF PERFECTION.—The next question to be considered is, how this conception of man as a self-creating being affects our argument, to the effect that for a perfectly informed man, with perfectly trained taste, there could never be more than one course of action possible, and that therefore there would be no freedom. Personally, I think it effects that argument in this way, namely, as showing that it amounts to no more than the assertion —possibly true, but certainly of no practical value— that for an infinitely wise, virtuous, and aesthetically perfect being there could be but one course of action conceivably possible. But for human beings as we know them the universe of effective desire seems always to offer alternatives ; for the best and wisest a choice between a possible good and a possible better, and for the vilest and most wicked between a possible evil and a possible worse. It is of course conceivable that man may some day reach a stage when there will be for him, as we may believe there is always for God, no course possible but the best, wisest, and most beautiful. But when, if ever, man's nature has become so perfect that no course is open to him but the absolute and unquestioned highest and best, he will not therefore cease to be a free agent. His will and his affections and his intellect will still ratify that as the highest and best ; it will still be his choice, though to choose anything else would be a denial of his whole self. Nay, it will be more perfectly *his* choice, for it will then be the

choice of the whole man, entire and complete. So long as there is any struggle, so long as there is anything in me that affords anything short of the very best and highest (or alternatively, anything short of the worst and lowest), an opportunity of rendering my choice doubtful, I cannot be perfectly free, since I must deny part of my desires, some part of my nature, in order to gratify the rest. It is only God, who desires good without alloy of evil, or Satan, who says 'Evil, be thou my good,' and desires evil without any temptation to or desire for good, who can be perfectly free, for only such a perfectly good or perfectly evil being can express the whole of his nature in a single volition.

The idea that a man, who has so conquered all temptations that he can no longer choose anything but the noblest and best of two alternatives, or for whom there has indeed ceased to be more than one alternative, is therefore less truly free than a man who is tempted, and struggles, and wins his victories only with difficulty is, rightly understood, only a special form of the old and familiar fallacy that the fewer temptations a man has the less virtuous he is capable of being because he can overcome fewer. But this is an obvious absurdity. If at one time a man is tempted to intemperance and then, after years of successful resistance, reaches a time when the desire for drink no longer has power over him, he is not less but more virtuous. If a man once passionate gains complete mastery over his temper,

he is not less but more virtuous. In both cases it is not merely the loss of an occasion of (perhaps) victorious struggle but the gain of a positive virtue, of temperance or of self-control. In short, we have to recognise three stages which may be described in the language of the old theologians. A material thing is incapable of any choice and so is unable to sin (*non posse peccare*). A sinful man is capable of choice and therefore can sin (*posse peccare*). God is, and a perfect human being would be, free to choose but certain always to choose right, and so cannot sin (*posse non peccare*). But there is an infinite difference between the first state and the last.

THE CONCLUSIONS ARRIVED AT AS TO FREE WILL. —We may sum up the conclusions we have come to as follows :—

(1) Man is a free spiritual being ; and the three aspects of a free spiritual act, loving, knowing, and willing, while never found wholly separate from one another, can never be resolved into one another, or expressed in terms one of the other. They are distinct, if not separate, activities of a spiritual being.

(2) None of them are capable of being explained in terms of mechanism ; and analogies between the action of a spiritual being, knowing, loving, or willing, and a material particle acted on by forces, are seldom helpful and often wholly misleading.

(3) A person choosing parades before the mind ideal ends which may be quite indefinite in number but which always involve the idea of the person who chooses doing, being, or suffering something. And choice consists in the person identifying himself with one of these ideal ends (with myself wearing a straw hat instead of with myself wearing a bowler if the choice is between hats) rather than with any of the others.

(4) The question, 'But what made him choose this rather than that?' is one which ought not to be asked, for it either begs the question, implying that there was some external cause which determined the choice, as the resultant of all the forces acting on a particle determines its movement, or it means no more than, 'What were the considerations affecting his choice?' and these, however fully stated, leave the choice itself still unaccounted for.

(5) Not all conceivable alternatives are rightly to be regarded as subjects of choice. Some things, being physically, intellectually, morally, or in some other way impossible, are outside the range of choice. And the things which are rightly regarded as objects of choice form together what we may call a 'universe of effective desire.'

(6) A man's character determines the content of his universe of effective desire.

(7) Man can form his own character. He is what he is, but, within very, perhaps infinitely, wide limits, he can become what he will.

(8) It is possible that a perfectly sanctified man may at last attain to a state when he is like God and his universe of effective desire never contains more than one alternative, the highest and best. But he will not then cease to be a free agent. Rather he will have attained perfect freedom, since the whole of his desires will be perfectly and completely expressed in a single volition.

CHAPTER VI

IS MAN A FALLEN CREATURE?

Not the Fall, but the possibility of a Fall, necessary—Three questions propounded—Is man a fallen creature?—The witness of man's conscience in all ages—Difficulties in the way of any theory of the Fall—The substitution of 'Falls' for a Fall—Difficulties unsolved by the view of the Fall just stated—What is needed.

NOT THE FALL, BUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A FALL, NECESSARY.—So far the argument of this book has been directed to establishing the following propositions, namely, (1) That a God who is to be for us a possible object of thought must be bound by the Law of Contradiction, so that it would be impossible for Him to do anything which would involve a contradiction; (2) that such a contradiction is implied in the demand that God should create a being possessed of free will and at the same time compel him to act virtuously; (3) that without free will morality is impossible, so that even for an omnipotent God the choice lay between creating a perfect machine or a free spiritual being who would be capable of choosing evil instead of good. If this argument holds good, it would appear that the possibility of a Fall was necessarily involved

in God's creating free spiritual beings. This is not to say that the Fall itself was necessary, still less is it identical with the thoroughly foolish and unphilosophic assertion that evil must always exist in order that good may be known by contrast with it. Not the Fall but the *possibility* of a Fall is claimed as necessary. If God had created beings who *could* not choose evil they would not have been moral beings. But when God had created man, and given him free will, man might conceivably have chosen good and not evil, in which case he would have been, not merely a moral being, one, that is to say, who is a fit subject for praise and blame, but a virtuous moral being, one, that is to say, who is a fit subject for praise alone, and not for blame. And if men had so chosen there would have been no Fall. But it is surely absurd to say that there would likewise have been no virtue, merely because there would have been no vice with which to compare it. One might as well contend that we should not recognise healthy life as a good if we had no experience of disease. People may, of course, maintain that our appreciation of health as a good thing is deepened and intensified by its contact with pain and sickness, and that in the same way man's sense of the nature of virtue is deepened and strengthened by his knowledge of evil. But this appears to me to be a fallacy, and moreover, to be one of that large class of fallacies which spring from comparing the spiritual with the physical. I can have no

knowledge of bodily ills till I have experienced them, though I may, notwithstanding, recognise the corresponding state of bodily health and well-being as a positive good. When I have actually had the toothache I say—'Ah! now I can sympathise with you. Now I know what it is like.' But with morals it seems to me that it is not so. I do not need to be angry, selfish, proud, mean, cruel or unchaste to know that these things are evil, and that love, unselfishness, meekness, generosity, kindness and purity are good. Nay more, since every act of choice is a voluntary identification of oneself with the thing chosen, the very fact of experiencing any of these evil things makes one less able to see their badness, or to love and appreciate their opposites. For this reason, as Dr. Moberly pointed out in *Atonement and Personality*, only a sinless man can be the perfect penitent, since only a man who has never sinned can perfectly hate sin and love virtue. We conclude, therefore, that the Fall was not a necessity, but the possibility of the Fall was.

THREE QUESTIONS PROPOUNDED.—It is, therefore, necessary to ask three questions, namely, (1) Are we justified in regarding man as a fallen creature? and (2) what can have been the nature of the Fall? and (3) what can we hope to deduce as to the true nature of unfallen man, and as to the possibility of a restoration? Now I am well aware that to many

people any discussion of the question will appear hopelessly out of date and futile. But before the question is so lightly dismissed I would remind the reader that, if man is not in *some* sense fallen, not merely the Christian religion but every religion of redemption is needless and absurd. And again, if man is in no sense fallen, the present condition of this world is in no sense the outcome of man's fault. In that case the whole responsibility rests with God; the world is as good as He could make it or as He cared to make it, and He is either not almighty or not all-merciful. There may, of course, be a way out of this dilemma, other than the belief that the evil of the world is due to the revolted wills of free spiritual beings whom God Himself cannot constrain to righteousness without the destruction of their moral freedom, but I confess I cannot imagine what it is. All talk about evil being a means to the emergence of good seems to me to be grossly and fundamentally immoral. All attempts to explain the fact that 'the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together' as a necessary feature of man's evolution to some far distant good seem to me incompatible either with God's goodness or His power. Why could He not give us this far distant good without the preliminary centuries of pain and sin? Leave out the factor of man's free will, and I confess I can find but two answers, the one of which denies His power, and the other His goodness. 'He does not spare us the

preliminary centuries of pain and sin because He can't!' Then He is not almighty. 'He does not spare us because He does not choose to!' Then He is not good. If, however, one regards man as a creature who has revolted against God, and uses his God-given freedom of will to defy a God who could annihilate him, but cannot make him choose good and not evil, and who, therefore, being infinite Love, prefers rather to plead, and wait, and with long patience hope for man's redemption, then we see a gleam of light.

Is Man a Fallen Creature?—Let us then address ourselves to the question—Is man a fallen creature? To me it seems a self-evident proposition that, no matter how it came about, man is at present 'far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil.' For there is nothing which appears to me more certain than the fact that when I am unselfish, gentle, meek, and poor in spirit, I am not merely happy, but conscious that in some strange way I am my true self, and am living my real true life. That man, as he ought to be, is not self-regarding but other-regarding, that he is a being whose true happiness lies in living for others, and seeking not his own, is the witness of all who have tried that way of life. Equally natural to man, in the right sense of the word natural, appears love rather than hate, and meekness rather than fierceness. Any one can try it for himself. Next

time any one is rude, or insolent, or overbearing with you try gentleness and meekness, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, and ask yourself whether that is not your true self. But equally certain it seems to me that this is not what comes natural to man in another sense of the word natural. A child can be in a real rage long before it can speak, and the difficulty of getting rid of a selfish or at least self-regarding attitude is a familiar topic with all moralists.

> Lord, I have fasted, I have prayed,
> And sackcloth has my girdle been;
> To purge my soul I have essayed
> With hunger blank and vigil keen.
> Oh, God of Mercy! Why am I
> Still haunted by the self I fly.
>
> (HURRELL FROUDE.)

Does it not seem as if man had been meant to be an altogether self-less, other-regarding, loving, and gentle creature, and by some strange twist or perversion had become selfish, self-centred, hating and fierce? In a word, is not man fallen?

There are many attempts to answer this question, but they all seem to fall into one of two classes, which we may call the evolutionary and the theosophic or gnostic. The first regards man's sin as a survival in him of qualities which were legitimate, and indeed valuable, in earlier stages of evolution. Man's cruelty, selfishness, and lust are, according to this view, to be regarded as survivals in him

of the tiger and the ape ; survivals which it is hoped further centuries of evolution may eliminate. To this view I should briefly oppose two objections. First, it seems to me to misunderstand the very nature of sin, which is not a stage on the way to perfection, but a departure from and denial of man's real nature. I often find lads hard, rough, untamed, and headstrong, in a way which has little or no moral significance. These qualities are the qualities of a young, undeveloped and untrained animal. But any man with experience can distinguish between such cases and those of boys who are cruel, violent, insubordinate and quarrelsome, and whose qualities contain an element of moral badness. The difference between anything which can rightly be called sin, and anything which can be rightly regarded as a stage in evolution, seems to me as distinct as the difference between a rotten apple and one which is merely unripe. And secondly, I do not think there is anything to support the idea that sin evolves into perfection, or that any cosmic process eliminates the occasions of sin. I dare say the way in which virtue and vice show themselves varies ; selfishness and anger will take different forms in the Stone Age, in Imperial Rome, and in London or Paris to-day. But neither in my own moral experience, or in history, do I find any warrant for the idea that any evolutionary process will yield perfect men.

The gnostic or theosophic explanation of sin

is that it is due to the immersion of spirit in the sea of matter, and its consequent breaking up into a number of separate personalities instead of its remaining united in the One. But this explanation lies open to innumerable objections familiar to all students of philosophy. Is the 'spirit' which is thus broken up and immersed in matter divine? Then there can be no sin. For to speak of God sinning is not merely theologically objectionable, but philosophically absurd. How can God sin? Man can sin, for he can voluntarily depart from his true nature *which is defined as like that of God*. But how can God depart from His true nature? What is the true nature of God? To be One? But what authority have we for that statement? If He who is now One likes at another time to manifest Himself as Many, by what authority do we attach the idea of sin to His latter rather than to His former state? Hindoo philosophy regards the manifold experience of this world as Brahma as it were expanding himself and manifesting himself in endless diversity. When again he contracts into himself, and resumes his oneness, nothing has been either added to him or taken from him. He was One; he became Many; he is again One. What sense or reason is there in regarding one of these states as sinful? Any philosophy which regards the cosmos as nothing but the manifestation of God must be non-moral in essence, and tends to be immoral in results.

If, however, the gnostic tries to escape these difficulties by regarding the 'spirit' which is broken up and immersed in matter as not being identical with 'the One' but some emanation or creation of the supreme spirit, there are fresh difficulties. Was the immersion in matter a voluntary act on the part of this created or emanating spirit, or was it involuntary? If voluntary, then the guilt remains with the spirit shut up in matter and the immersion in matter was a voluntary fall. And so we are back at the orthodox Christian position of a fallen man. But if the immersion in matter was an involuntary thing, then there is no responsibility and so no sin at all. And it is this position which has so frequently, in history, landed gnostics in an immoral antinomianism (which regards sin as a matter wholly of the body and, therefore, of no importance to the soul) or in a world-condemning asceticism which is incapable of 'using the world without abusing it.' No position is really compatible with morality, which makes sin anything but *the free choice of a spiritual being choosing evil and not good.* And the question whether man is a fallen creature resolves itself into this—Was there an act of choice which so affected man's nature that all succeeding individuals are in some way corrupted. It is not necessary at this point to introduce the question of guilt (*i.e.* of personal responsibility) and to ask—'Is every man who is born born bad, and morally responsible for his badness?' It will be enough

at this point to ask—'Is every man who is born born with a corrupted nature, so that he is naturally inclined to what is evil?'

THE WITNESS OF MAN'S CONSCIENCE IN ALL AGES.—I think one thing is plain, namely, that no one would deny that man is a fallen creature if it were not for the extreme difficulty of saying *how* he is fallen, and of finding any room for a Fall in the history of man, and of the world as modern science teaches us to read that history. On the one hand there is the witness of writers in every age to the corruption of human nature, a witness reinforced, as it seems to me, by each man's own conscience. I may be mistaken as to the attitude of other men, but personally I should endorse the words of Pascal when he writes—'For myself, I am free to declare, that as soon as I discovered in the Christian religion the doctrine that man is fallen and separated from God, I saw on every side indications of its truth.' Dr. Tennant, in his Hulsean Lectures on *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, points out that what history and our consciences bear witness to is not that man is fallen, but that his nature is corrupt, which is not the same thing. 'The corruptness of man's heart,' he writes, 'to which all literature bears its sorrowful witness, is one thing; the original sin with which it is confounded, or which is alleged to be its source, is quite another.' And he adds in a note this further

comment. 'A "chaos not yet reduced to order" will present exactly the same appearance to observation as a "wreck and ruin of a once fair and perfect harmony." Which of the two explanations of man's sinful state is the true one is a question to be decided by argument.' That, of course, is perfectly true. All questions are to be decided by argument. But two powerful arguments against the view that man's initial condition was a 'chaos not yet reduced to order' suggest themselves at once. The first is contained in the question—'How came God to create a chaos?' The moral and physical evil of this world is no light matter. Putting physical evil (pain) out of the question, moral evil alone is a hideous thing which nothing can render worth while. What state of future blessedness, either for the race or the individual, is it which is to be attained by some process of evolution, and to which the life of a girl who enters a brothel at sixteen and dies of syphilis at five-and-twenty is a means, or a stage? If the initial chaos, from which the world as we know it has evolved, was God's work for which God was responsible, then indeed we must say:

> 'Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth did'st make,
> And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake;
> For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
> Is blacken'd—Man's forgiveness give—and take.'

Only if that chaos is regarded as not in a true sense initial but as resulting from man's rebellion

against a God who, in the beginning, made him good, only so can we retain a belief in a God at once all-good and almighty.

And the second argument is one which Dr. Tennant himself notices and to which, with his accustomed fairness and clear-mindedness, he allows the fullest weight. I cannot do better than state the argument in Dr. Tennant's own words. It is the argument for a Fall of some kind which is supplied by the 'direct deliverance of conscience, on the one hand, behind which it is not possible to go, that we are chargeable for the guilt of sin, and the fact that, on the other hand, the bias to evil in us seems to be prior to any conscious act, and, therefore, born with us.' If those twin deliverances of conscience are to be trusted, *man is a fallen being who is in some way responsible for his own fall.* The first conclusion, namely, that *man is a fallen being*, was long accepted, and explained by reference to the story of man's fall as given in Genesis; or in religions other than Judaism, Christianity, and Mahomedanism, by some similar story. The second conclusion, namely, that *man was responsible for his own fall*, was evaded, or rather perhaps we ought to say not fully recognised. The idea of individual moral responsibility for one's actions was an idea that could not reach full development till Christianity had given full content to the idea of personality. The responsibility of an entire family for the acts of a single member (as in the punishment of all the house of

Achan [1]), and the ' visiting of the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation,' were ideas which it needed no little development of a sense of personality to render morally untenable. But, whether the full implications are explicitly realised or not, the ' direct deliverance of conscience ' remains, and if it can be trusted the two inevitable conclusions are : (1) that man is responsible for his sins, and (2) that, notwithstanding this, the tendency to sin is earlier than any conscious act. *A fall for which each individual is in some way responsible seems the only explanation.*

Difficulties in the Way of any Theory of the Fall.—What then are the difficulties in the way of accepting the idea of man as a fallen being ? The chief difficulty is that of suggesting any point, in the history of man as we know him, when such a Fall could have occurred. The idea of primitive man as a special and distinct creation, perfect and complete physically, morally and intellectually, is one for which modern science can find no room. Modern science knows nothing of a fallen, but rather of an ascended, man ; one, that is to say, who has evolved from lower forms of life, and not one who has fallen from some primitive state of perfection. To quote Dr. Tennant again, we may say—' Literary criticism and historical exegesis, comparative religion and race-psychology, geology and anthro-

[1] Joshua vii. 24-26.

pology all contribute materially to the cumulative evidence on this head.'

But if we may not think of man as fallen from a state of primitive perfection, can we still find room for the Fall somewhere within the course of evolution as we have come to believe in it? Some writers, recognising the importance of the idea of a Fall to any and all religions of redemption, and desperately anxious therefore to retain the Fall at any price, suggest that the Fall may have taken place when man first, in the long course of his evolution, reached a point where he was capable of appreciating moral distinctions. Somewhere, they say, between the mere brute, moved solely by animal impulses, and the fully awakened man, looking before and after, knowing good and evil, and proposing to himself ends, somewhere between these two, there would necessarily be a point in time when man for the first time would distinguish between right and wrong. It was then, we are asked to believe, that man chose evil, and not good, and launched himself and his race down the inclined slope of evil. But there are insuperable objections to this view. What we are looking for is a Fall which we may regard as the true cause, the *fons et origo* of the evil in the world to-day. Does such a Fall as we are now considering supply such a cause. Clearly, it does not. It was hard enough to reconcile, with a belief in the justice of God, the idea of a whole race corrupted by the guilty act of a single

couple when we thought of that couple as almost godlike—

> 'Adam, the goodliest of his sons since born,
> The fairest of her daughters, Eve.'

How much more if, instead of a perfect and godlike couple, fresh from the hands of their Creator, we are to think of a creature scarcely human, *pithecanthropus erectus*, somewhere in the swamp of the Indo-African continent, or the uplands of Central Asia, or wherever else the cradle of the race may have been. Is it conceivable that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together because some scarcely human creature, in the far distant past, chose, of two dimly apprehended alternatives, the wrong instead of the right? Can we think that anything which could truly be the fall of a whole race could turn on the act of a being lower in the scale of intellect and morals than a Congo native, or an Australian black-boy? Far better dispense with the idea of the Fall altogether.

The Substitution of 'Falls' for a Fall.—To escape these difficulties many people nowadays take refuge in the idea that the Fall of Man, as described, for instance, in the Book of Genesis, is a kind of timeless idealisation of something which really takes place in every individual life. When the child comes to self-consciousness, he is already possessed of a body with strong desires, habits, and instincts. This body has, as it were, got the

start of the soul both in the life of the individual (alike in the womb of the mother before birth, and in the months or years of merely animal and instinctive life which lie between the date of the child's birth and the dawn of self-consciousness and of a moral sense), and even more in those long ages of evolution during which the body of the individual may be said to have been in the making, since those ages have left their mark deep on the structure of the body and on the habits implied by that body. Thus, the soul, when it awakens, finds itself bound up with, and responsible for, a body with strong desires and passions. And these passions and desires, though in themselves non-moral and harmless, are such that their indulgence by a free, self-conscious moral being is sin. Hence the soul has to conquer, discipline and, so to speak, *moral*-ise the body. But the newly awakened soul is weak and the vigorous animal body is strong. Hence the soul is often defeated. Hence the Fall of Man is something which repeats itself in every life, and the story in Genesis may be taken as a kind of timeless allegory, and a truth which repeats itself again and again in the life of each individual soul. This, I take it, is more or less the view of Dr. Tennant in his Hulsean Lectures on *The Origin of Sin*. For he writes of fallen man as follows:[1] 'What if he were flesh before spirit; lawless, impulse-governed organism, fulfilling as such the nature

[1] Page 11.

necessarily his, and, therefore, the life God willed for him in his earliest age, until his moral consciousness was awakened to start him, heavily weighed with the inherited load, not indeed of abnormal and corrupted nature, but of non-moral and necessary animal instinct and self-assertive tendency, on that race-long struggle of flesh with spirit, and spirit with flesh, which for us, alas! becomes but another name for the life of sin?' And again, later in his argument, he asks:[1] 'Can we assign the rise of evil itself simply to the difficulty of the task which has to be encountered by every individual person alike, the task of forcing his inherited organic nature to obey a normal law which he has only gradually been enabled to discern?'

Now does this way of regarding the Fall meet the requirements of the case? I must confess that to my mind it fails completely. It is an ungracious task to criticise a book so interesting as the one Dr. Tennant has written, and one, too, conceived in so fine a spirit. But to my mind the mark of the science laboratory is deep upon it, and it has all the faults of what I may describe as description-philosophy. After all, to describe a thing is not to explain it. Dr. Tennant gives us a fine account of the empirical facts; he describes the way in which the phenomenon of sin makes its appearance in the experience of the individual, and the marks whereby

[1] Page 81.

conscious sin is to be distinguished from merely instinctive action. Of the origin of sin, or of the reasons for its appearance in a world created by an All-wise and All-powerful God, he says nothing. Reading his book, interesting and suggestive as it is, I could not help recalling the criticism of Herbert Spencer, and the whole school of descriptive philosophers, made by a Cambridge undergraduate who had been undergoing a course of them. 'They describe a cow,' he complained, 'and nicely distinguish those points which differentiate it from a crab, and then they imagine that they have accounted for the existence of life on this planet.' So the genetic treatment of the problem of evil describes the phenomena of sin; its origin and essential nature remains unexplained. And none of the difficulties which surround the question of sin and pain are really met by the evolutionary treatment of the matter. Let us consider some of these difficulties in the light of the idea of a fall in each man's life at the first dawn of consciousness.

Difficulties Unsolved by the View of the Fall just stated.—The chief difficulty is that it quite fails to justify that serious view of sin, as a thing for which man is rightly blamed, which is one of the most certain facts of the moral conscience, and one to which Dr. Tennant himself bears witness when he writes of the 'direct deliverance of conscience, behind which it is not possible to go, that

we are chargeable for the guilt of sin.' But if, as Dr. Tennant says, 'we can assign the rise of evil itself simply to the difficulty of the task to be encountered by every individual person alike, the task of enforcing his inherited organic nature to obey a moral law which he has only gradually been enabled to discern,' how is man responsible? God has caused him to start handicapped, and not merely so, but to start handicapped out of all possibility of winning. For if the witness of all the ages is to be credited, there has never been one single individual (Christ excepted) who has not sinned. If the difficulty of victory is so great that, in thousands of millions of cases, no one single man has ever won, surely the guilt of failure must be so small that we need not trouble about it.

Another difficulty is that the proposed solution offers no help in what is really the chief crux of the problem, namely, why God allowed sin in the world at all. If the whole mass of the sin and misery of the world is really due to the fact that man's body evolved before his spiritual parts, are we not entitled to say that the blame rests with God? Why did He not create the world so that the spiritual nature of man should evolve before the animal nature, or at least *pari passu* with it? It is, of course, open to any one to say that this is a question that man has no right to ask. 'Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it—Why

hast thou made me thus?' But for all that, men do ask these questions, and the impulse to seek an answer is supplied by one of the noblest traits in man, his conviction that, if only he could understand the how and why of things, he would find God to be perfectly just. Now this conviction may of course be a delusion. God may be omnipotent malice. In that case this is no solution to the problem of how the existence of evil is to be reconciled with God's omnipotence, justice, and love. Or again, the conviction of God's perfect justice may be well grounded, but the solution we seek may be one which, for reasons we cannot understand, God purposely withholds from us. In that case there is nothing for us to do but to pray for such faith in God as will enable us to say—'Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust Thee.' But no solution of the problem can claim to be satisfactory which does not display sin as a thing for which man and man alone is responsible, and, therefore, as something which God could not prevent except at the cost of destroying man's nature as a free being.

But there is a third objection to the view of the Fall which regards it as the struggle between man's newly awakened self-consciousness and his inherited animal nature, and it is this, namely, that it renders it impossible to establish any connection between sin (*i.e.* man's voluntary revolt against God, and choice of his own will instead of the will of his Creator) and physical evil, namely, pain, disease,

and death. Now I will frankly admit that the problem of pain appears to me a less one than the problem of moral evil. Pain may be a means to an end without shocking my moral sense, while sin can never be anything but a positive evil and a means to nothing but spiritual loss and, if persevered in, spiritual death. But for all that the problem of pain is not a light one. 'Nature, red in tooth and claw,' does really present moral difficulties, and so, to a far greater extent, do human sufferings and the existence of cancers, volcanic eruptions, appalling accidents, and similar causes of human agony and grief. If, indeed, we are to 'justify the ways of God to man,' we must establish some connection between human sin and physical evil so as to remove the latter also from the category of things for which God is responsible. For, as Dr. M'Taggart has truly pointed out, even if it can be shown that physical pain works moral good, yet, if God could have attained the same end, namely, the moral reformation of the sinner, in some painless way, we cannot call God absolutely good since He inflicts needless pain on His creatures. Only if we can establish some necessary connection between human sin and physical evil can we hope to see the latter as something compatible at once with God's perfect goodness and true omnipotence.

And what is true of pain as a means to moral reformation is true of struggle, suffering, and death as means to the evolution of physical perfection.

If I may, for clearness sake, express this point quite brutally, I would say that, if God could have produced a perfect race of animals without the pain, bloodshed, and struggle necessary for the present method of advance by the survival of the fittest, then there is no excuse for His not having adopted that other painless method. And if He could not have produced such a perfect race, except by this painful and bloody process, then He would seem to be less than omnipotent. A confident young biologist at Cambridge once assured me that it was impossible that advance in the physical world should have been attained in any other way than by the elimination of the unfit and the survival of the fittest. Now, even if it were not possible to imagine any other way in which progress might have been made, one ought to shrink from asserting such an universal negative as is contained in the denial that any other way is possible. But we need not stop there. It is perfectly possible to imagine a way in which progress would have been possible without strife, suffering and death. The human body does not grow by mutual strife between the different members. A man's brain does not, in healthy development, grow at the expense of his legs, or his heart at the expense of his stomach. Of course there are pathological states in which one part of a man's body grows at the expense of another. But in normal healthy growth the growth of an organism is by the mutual service of the parts, and not by

the mutual conflict. Could not the whole visible universe have grown like an organism by mutual help and without struggle? It seems hard to say that such a thing need necessarily be impossible for an omnipotent God.

WHAT IS NEEDED.—What then is needed is a theory of the Fall which will meet the following requirements. It must (1) display sin as altogether man's fault; the revolt of a free spiritual being against his creator; and (2) it must be such as to establish a connection between man and the physical universe such that physical suffering may be seen to be the necessary outcome of moral evil. For then God may truly be incapable of putting an end to pain except by putting an end to sin, and incapable of putting an end to sin without destroying the very nature of man, as a free spirit, save by the long process of winning man back to Himself with infinite patience and long-suffering love. And (3) our theory of the Fall must supply some explanation of why the evolution of the world is one of strife and pain, and not the painless and easy growth of a healthy organism in which each part helps each, and all help all.

Can we imagine such a Fall?

CHAPTER VII

A THEORY OF THE FALL STATED

The Fall a pre-mundane event—Divine Nature and Human Nature—What is man's true nature?—Unfallen man and the Fall—The World and the Individual—The relationship of the Logos to the Universe—The Solidarity of Humanity—The effect of the Fall on the Universe—Dogmatic résumé.

THE FALL A PRE-MUNDANE EVENT.—In seeking a doctrine of the Fall there is one thing which I personally have long been convinced of, namely, that no view will be found adequate which regards the fall of man as something which took place in this world under our present conditions of being. The Fall must have occurred, if at all, in some state of being very different from our present state. Now this view will be, to ordinary men and women, so new and startling that, if only to gain a patient hearing for it, I may at once say that it has been widely held. Origen held the view that man's fall was pre-natal. Kant was led, by a totally different train of reasoning, to regard the Fall as an act for which man is truly responsible, but which was prior to any conscious act of choice in this world, and the fruits of which are in him at

birth. That is to say, Kant regarded the Fall as something which occurred in some supersensible sphere, outside the limits of time and space as we know them. Coleridge speaks of a 'Spiritual Fall or Apostacy *antecedent* to the formation of man —a belief, the scriptural grounds of which are few and of diverse interpretation, but which has been almost universal in the Christian Church.' This idea he seems to owe not merely to Kant, whose opinions I have already referred to, but even more largely to Schelling. Finally, Dr. Julius Müller, whom Dr. Tennant describes as having devoted to this subject the most thorough attention it has ever, perhaps, received, and as being 'resolute to do justice to both sides of the antinomy,' was forced 'to postulate behind the fall of Adam an individual turning away from the divine light to the darkness of self-absorbed selfishness in a life beyond the bounds of time!'

I have quoted these authorities for a belief in a pre-mundane fall in order to convince the reader that the view is no new one. But in justice to myself I feel bound to add that I arrived at it myself quite independently, before I knew anything of the views of any of the writers quoted except Kant—and before I had rightly appreciated the importance of his view—and that of Dr. Müller's views my knowledge is still merely a second-hand one. For his view, as presented by Dr. Tennant, seems so like my own that after buying his *Christian Doctrine*

of Sin, I thought it might be better not to read it till this book was in print, and so his two volumes stand unread on my shelves.

But after all, questions of originality are of small moment, and if a view is helpful and true it is a matter of very small importance who first advanced it. I am so convinced of the need for the acceptance of a pre-mundane fall, as absolutely necessary for any adequate view of moral and physical evil, and have found that view so helpful in co-ordinating a vast range of facts in other departments of thought, that I only want to obtain for it a careful and respectful hearing. Let us see if we can formulate any working hypothesis as to the nature of such a Fall.

Divine Nature and Human Nature.—A first step will be to get as clear a conception as possible of divine nature, as we believe it to be, and of human nature as we find it in actual experience. Now divine nature, as revealed to us in the Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, is described as being that of three Persons (distinct centres of Will, Knowledge and Desire) functioning in and through one common nature. And of these Persons, and of this nature, certain things may be said. Thus (1) the entire nature is possessed by, and displayed in, each Person ; so that there is nothing in the nature which is not in each Person, and nothing in any one of the Persons which is not in each of the others. And (2) there are none of the limits or boundaries

of individuality between the Persons, but their relationship is such as can be expressed in the words, 'I in Him and He in Me.' Indeed the true nature of spirit seems to be that spirit should be interpenetrated with spirit; so that as matter is that which is mutually exclusive and impenetrable, spirit is that, on the other hand, which is inclusive and interpenetrable. And (3) we may say that the nature of each Person is such that they are other-regarding, self-less, seeking each not His own glory, but each seeking to glorify the other. In a word, the nature of each is Love.

Now, let us contrast this divine nature, as we believe it to be in God, with human nature as we find it to be in man. We find (1) most clearly that only a portion of the totality of human nature is shown forth in any one individual. Whether we consider intellectual or moral qualities, nothing is more obvious than that no man has all endowments. Many popular sayings witness to this, such as 'It takes all sorts to make a world,' or 'We have the defects of our qualities.' But it is not merely as between individuals that we see this truth made plain. Different nations seem to exemplify different qualities, mental and moral. It has been truly said that we shall never know what Christianity really is till all nations have been converted, since different nations show different sides or facets as it were of humanity, and it takes all nations to display the fulness of human nature.

And as each human being possesses and displays only a fraction of human nature, so too we find (2) that each individual is shut up in the narrow circle of his own self so that he cannot peep into the soul of another, nor admit another into his own inmost being. This rigid imprisonment of the self, in the narrow circle of its own being, has been a frequent theme with philosophers and poets. Dr. d'Arcy finely expresses it when he writes 'It *may* be true . . . in the case of material things, that the only obstacle to perfect knowledge is the infinity of detail; but it is not true in the case of minds. Mind is separated from mind by a barrier which is, not figuratively, but literally impassable. It is impossible for any ego to leap this barrier and enter into the experiences of any other ego.' And this thought of the lonely isolation of the individual soul has been a common thought among poets. Thus, Lord Houghton writes, in the poem 'Strangers Yet':

> 'Oh! the bitter thought to scan
> All the loneliness of man:—
> Nature, by magnetic laws,
> Circle unto circle draws,
> But they only touch when met,
> Never mingle—strangers yet.'

And the late Francis Thompson has a supreme expression of the same thought in his poem 'A Fallen Yew,' a poem too long to quote here, but which is a perfect expression of the idea I am trying to make plain. Perhaps, however, the best ex-

pression of the idea is that which Matthew Arnold has supplied in his poem 'Isolation,' for he not merely expresses the idea of the loneliness and isolation of each individual soul, but also suggests (*a*) that it is not the true or original condition of human spirit, and (*b*) that the original unity *might* be restored. The whole poem is worth quoting :—

'Yes: in the sea of life enisled
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone*.
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights
And they are swept by balms of spring,
And in their glens, on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing,
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
Across the sounds and channels pour:

Oh then a longing like despair
Is to their farthest caverns sent;
—For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent.
Now round us spreads the watery plain—
Oh, might our marges meet again.

Who order'd that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cool'd?
Who renders vain their deep desire?
A God, a God their severance rul'd;
And bade between their shores to be
The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea.'

But how if God has not ruled this isolation but, on the contrary, created man in His own image, so that all souls should share one nature with no impassable barriers between soul and soul? How if 'their severance' is not God's act but one of the fruits of the Fall? Let us, before considering this possibility, touch on the third marked difference between human and divine nature.

As we have said, the nature of God, as revealed to us in the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, is such that each Person is other-regarding, self-less, seeking not His own glory; looking, if we may so express ourselves, outward, not inward. Man, as we know him, on the contrary, is self-regarding, self-centred, seeking his own, and looks, so to speak, inwards, and not outwards.

WHAT IS MAN'S TRUE NATURE?—Now this comparison between divine and human nature inevitably suggests the question, 'Is man's *true* nature something very different from his nature as we find it now?' And many things suggest that this question must be answered in the affirmative. First and foremost among such considerations we must rank the famous *Paradox of Hedonism*. This paradox is so remarkable in its nature, has been so widely recognised, and can be so easily verified that the reader may be invited to consider it carefully. It may be stated thus:—On the one hand anything which is to be a good *for me* must in some

sense be *my* good. A sweet that *I* do not taste is not sweet to me. A pursuit in which *I* find no pleasure is not pleasurable to me. An end that I propose to myself as good must in some way be good *for me*. Yet at the same time if I seek only my own happiness I am pretty sure to miss it. If I take up a pursuit simply for the enjoyment it will afford I am sure to be disillusioned. The pleasure seeker is always the pleasure loser. Only by forgetting self in the object sought can happiness be gained. The man who serves wife or family, or a cause, or a church, without thought of self will find happiness ; the man who tries to make these things, or any one of them, a mere means to his own happiness is certain to miss happiness altogether. 'For whosoever would save his life shall lose it ; and whosoever would lose his life for My sake shall find it.' Man's true nature seems to be such that he can only find satisfaction in giving himself for others, which surely is a proof that

> 'Nearer we hold to God
> Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.'

And the next thing which seems to point to the conclusion that man's true nature is something other than what we see it to be now is the fact that the very essence of sin is selfishness, and yet selfishness—the state of being, that is to say, of a self-centred creature—seems our natural condition irrespective of any choice of ours. We seem to be

born in a state ' very far gone from original righteousness.' It was surely this that prompted James Hinton to declare that the ' self ' is a defect, a ' not,' a minus quantity. Now the question is whether we can form any conception of what the nature of unfallen man may possibly have been like. If we can do so, even provisionally, we can use it as an hypothesis and see to what extent it serves to explain and co-ordinate the facts of experience. Now it seems to me that, guided (*a*) by our conception of the nature of God, and (*b*) by what we feel to be the shortcomings and failures of human nature as it is, we can reach a workable conception of unfallen humanity. And since in a matter like this it is better to be clearly absurd than obscure, whether absurd or not, I will for clearness sake state plainly what I believe was the nature of unfallen man, and of the Fall.

Unfallen Man and the Fall.—I believe that mankind was created in the likeness of God in such a way that as God is Three Persons (*i.e.* three centres of Knowledge, Will and Love) in a unity of Being, so Adam (mankind, the whole race, the totality of human spirit) was an infinite number of persons (centres of knowledge, will, and love) in a unity of being. And just as, when I speak of God and say that all Three Persons are in one Being, I do not mean merely that the nature of the Father is *like* that of the Son, or the nature of the Son

like that of the Father, or the nature of either *like* that of the Holy Ghost, but that it is all one and the same nature, all Three Persons possessing, functioning through, and being expressed in, the whole of the Godhead, so when I speak of many human souls being in one nature I do not merely mean that they were all exactly alike in character, but that they all possessed, functioned through, and were expressed in one single nature. And since all men who have lived, are living, or will live, were *in Adam* (*i.e.* in this created unity of human spirit) we may say that before the Fall the reader was in Adam, and that he possessed in himself the totality of human nature. What then was the Fall ? *The Fall was the assertion of the individual against the unity.* We can get some picture of the Fall if we imagine—if we may do so without irreverence—One Person of the Blessed Trinity asserting Himself against the others and seeking His own honour and not that of the others. Such an action would be a shattering of the very nature of God. Similarly, an assertion of the individual against the unity in mankind would be a shattering of human nature. And its results would, it seems, be just those that mark fallen man.

Firstly, the individual would become a self-centred, self-seeking being, instead of a self-less, other-regarding being. Secondly, each individual, no longer possessing the totality of human spirit as his own, but shut up in the narrow circle of his

particular fraction of human nature, would be a partial, limited being, showing some parts of the mental and moral endowments of humanity and not others. The oft-discussed question as to the result of the Fall, whether it was the loss of some powers, or the addition of some evil desires, or the weakening of the will, or something else not specified, may be answered, on this view, by asserting that it was a twist or inversion of man's nature, by which he became an egoistic instead of an altruistic being, and also a shattering and maiming of each individual by which he became a limited and partial being instead of a complete and perfect one.

Now this view is in curious agreement with that set out in that beautiful little mediaeval treatise, the *Theologia Germanica*. The anonymous writer of that book, speaking of the Fall, says :—

'It is said, it was because Adam ate the apple that he was lost, or fell. I say it was because of his claiming something for his own, and because of his I, Mine, Me, and the like. Had he eaten seven apples, and yet never claimed anything for his own, he would not have fallen.'

THE WORLD AND THE INDIVIDUAL.—Now clearly this Fall, or anything in the least like it, could not have taken place on the present globe. But that should be no difficulty. The idealistic philosophy, which for so long dominated European thought, and which, until quite recently, was the prevailing

form of philosophic doctrine in every English-speaking university, has always taught that the visible universe is in some ways constructed by, and the work of, human spirit. As Kant says, 'the mind makes the world.' This idea will be wholly unintelligible to the non-philosophic reader, and will, at first, I fear, appear absurd to him. But while man *on his animal side* is a creature of the earth, the highest of the vertebrates and the last developed in time, *on his spiritual side it cannot be so.* An illustration may help. I once heard an Atheist lecturer speaking of the glories of the visible universe, the immeasurable vastness of space, the distance from the earth to even the nearest star, the glorious size and complexity of star-clusters, and of nebulae, the unimaginable periods of time required for geological and astronomical evolution. He ended by asking whether it was possible to believe that such an insect of a day as man, so lately evolved on such an insignificant planet as the earth, could be an object of care to, or of importance in the eyes of, the Creator of such an universe, if indeed there is any Creator. But it did not seem difficult to me to answer him. I declared that I would not be bludgeoned out of my rights as a spiritual being by all his talk of millions of miles of space and millions of tons of matter, for I, as a man, was truly greater than the whole of the inanimate universe since, by the very act of describing it, I proved that I could contain it in my mind. The

man who knows, describes, and admires the Solar system, or the Milky Way, is greater than either, for *he has them in his mind.*

But he is not only greater than them ; he, in a true sense, creates them. I do not say that he creates them out of nothing ; but he makes them what they are. Let us see exactly what this means. Every one knows that, whereas most people see cherries red, and the leaves of the cherry-tree green, there are people (colour-blind we call them) who can see no difference between them. So we say that cherries are red, and leaves are green. But suppose the whole race had been colour-blind, what then would be the colour of cherries ? We may assert that the cherries would still be one colour and the leaves another, though no man ever had, or ever could see any difference, but the more we think of this statement, the more we shall see that it does not mean anything. Let us go a step further, borrowing an illustration from the late Professor James. If it were possible—it is not of course, but if it were—to perform an operation so as to attach the nerves of your eyes to your ears, and the nerves of your ears to your eyes, so that you should see all that you now hear, and hear all that you now see, would the world be the same world that it is now ? Let any reader who knows a little psychology try and imagine how he would reconstruct the world out of his new sensations, and what sort of a world it would be, and he will see in what sense the mind or, as

I prefer to word it, human spirit makes the world. Let us go further still. Suppose the course of physical evolution had produced a race of men with only one sense, that, say, of touch, what would the world have been like? Readers may reply that the world would certainly have *appeared* differently to such men to what it does to us, but it would have *been* the same. To which I can only reply that if my reader knows what the world really *is*, as distinct from what it *appears to him*, he is singularly fortunate. For my part, I only know the universe as it appears to me, and a world which appeared totally different would be to me a perfectly different world.

The reader can now amuse himself by constructing for himself any number of possible worlds. What would the world be for a being who had a great many extra senses, so that he could hear electricity and see X-rays. What would the world be for a creature who could only conceive of two dimensions of space (flat-land) or again for one whose space had four or more dimensions? The more we consider the question, the more we shall be forced to admit that the world *is what it is because man is such a being as he is*. If man were something radically different the universe would also be radically different.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE LOGOS TO THE UNIVERSE.—It seems to me that we have here the

explanation of the connection between Christ, the Logos, and the visible universe. The Logos is often spoken of as the seal or signet which gives form or shape to the world, but in what sense can the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity be said to be the pattern after which the worlds were made? In what way can this varied material universe be said to be fashioned after the pattern of the Logos? What we have just been considering of the relationship of the world and the individual supplies the key. The world is what it is because man is what he is. If man were different, the world would be different, for the nature of man settles and determines the nature of the universe. Hence, the universe may be said to be the reflection of human spirit. But man himself is made in the image and likeness of God! Hence, the Logos, the express image of God, is the archtype of which humanity and the world are descending copies. We may trace a descending series, God the Father, Self-existing Spirit; the Son, or Logos, the eternal uncreated image and likeness of the Father; mankind, the created image of God; the universe, the temporal reflection of man. We must be careful not to think of a single individual man, the reader for instance, or any one like him, when we speak of the world as the reflection of man. It is not this man, or that man, but the unity—ideally perfect and even now not wholly broken—of all men which is meant by the expression 'human spirit.' Now

if we remember this we may say that the Earth Spirit of whom Goethe writes—

> 'Tis thus at the roaring loom of Time I ply
> And weave for God the garment thou seest Him by,'

is really 'human spirit,' the totality of humanity.

The Solidarity of Humanity.—It is difficult for any one, coming fresh to the subject, to get any idea of this unity of human spirit which is composed of—it would be more accurate to say, which *is*—all the souls that have lived, are living, and will live. Yet the solidarity, the close union, that is to say, one with another, of all souls is an idea to which many modern ideas and discoveries in psychology are giving increasing force daily. To the ordinary man, looking at things altogether from the physical point of view, and always tempted to identify his real self with his material body, nothing can be more distinct than John Smith and Tom Brown. Yet the great German thinker, Fechner, regarded individuals as waves of the sea, separated one from another at their crests, but all united in a common ocean. I find greater help in thinking of individuals as the different peaks of a mountain range, the valleys of which are full of mist. What could look more isolated than the peaks? Yet below the mist they are all united in a single range. The various phenomena of the subconscious self are now being investigated, and may be expected to throw great light on such subjects as thought transference,

genius, and many other mysteries. One thing I am sure will be further made obvious, and that is the real solidarity of the human race. If, then, this conception of human spirit, as the totality of human souls, is kept in mind, I should be inclined to say that the visible universe bore the same relationship to human spirit that the body does to the individual soul. Aristotle's view that the soul supplies the 'form' of the body will then correspond to our view that human spirit supplies the form of the visible universe.

THE EFFECT OF THE FALL ON THE UNIVERSE.—If the relationship of the universe to human spirit is at all what I have supposed, the Fall could not have been without its effect on the whole visible universe. A perfect, unfallen humanity would necessarily imply a perfect universe. And since such a universe would be the expression of a single spiritual unity, it would be capable of growth and development without strife and pain. It would, that is to say, be an organism capable of perfect development by mutual service, and not by strife and the survival of the fittest. Hence, we are justified in saying that an unfallen race would inhabit a world free from pain and death, and 'all very good.' The world would be the healthy body of a healthy spirit.

Now, such a Fall as we have pictured would be the complete shattering of the race. But such a

shattering of human spirit would reduce the universe to chaos. Now such shattered fragments of humanity would have no power of restoration, no power to come together again. A new principle of unity would be required. This we believe was supplied by the New Humanity of Christ, the Second Adam. For the end and object of redemption is 'that in the dispensation of the fulness of time He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are on earth; even in Him in whom also we have obtained an inheritance.' For Christ took human nature, we must believe, before the foundation of the world. And then, a new principle of unity having been supplied, the long process of cosmic evolution began. And all evolution is a return to unity. The evolution of civilisation is the process by which all men come to will the same thing instead of willing diverse aims. The evolution of knowledge is the process whereby all men come to believe the same instead of holding diverse and therefore false opinions. The evolution of ethics is the process by which all men come to love the same thing as the *Summum Bonum* instead of having diverse standards of good.

We may look on the whole process of cosmic evolution in the physical world from the primal nebula—or, yet earlier, from the ether out of which atoms were formed—to the world as we know it, as the outward reflection of the gradual unification

of spirit. And such unification, yielding ever increasing richness of content, would correspond to an external ever greater complexity, a richer diversity in unity.

But until the unity of mankind is once more as complete as the Unity of God—the end and goal being that they all may be one even as Christ and the Father are One—the universe is not the organism of a single harmonious spirit, but the expression of a shattered unity striving to reach reconciliation. And so 'the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now . . . waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body.' And when man's unity is once more perfect 'there shall be a new Heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.'

If any reader asks where man was in those long distant ages when the vast primaeval saurians lived and fought in the slime, the answer will be that any such question is as unmeaning as the question—'Where is the soul while the foetus develops in the womb?' The soul is the 'form' of the individual and, as the physical body develops, so the soul finds itself able to express itself more and more completely. But the spiritual nature of man is prior to, and the cause of, the physical development. This is, expressed in the terms of the theologian, the same doctrine which the teacher of biology expresses in the saying that 'Function precedes organism'; that eyes are

evolved because we desire to see, not that we see because there happen to be eyes.

DOGMATIC RÉSUMÉ.—The whole position that I desire to display is so difficult for the ordinary reader to grasp, and so remote from the ordinary course of theological or scientific speculation to-day, that I propose to state it shortly, dogmatically, and without further attempt at proof, so that the reader may at any rate understand what he is asked to believe. Proof, in the ordinary sense of the word, is out of the question. The view I advance will be accepted or not as an hypothesis according to the greater or less number of difficulties it is found capable of meeting, and the greater or less number of problems it solves.

So then, let us see what is the outline of the theory. I regard the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity as the starting point. In the Godhead are three Persons (centres of Knowledge, Will, and Love) *in* each of which the whole nature of God is perfectly shown forth, and *by* each of which that whole nature is possessed. Man (Adam) was the created image of this Godhead, being an infinite number of persons (centres of knowledge, will, and love) *in* each of which the whole nature of man was perfectly shown forth, and *by* each of which that whole nature was possessed. Many persons, one nature. Not merely many persons all like and with similar natures, but many personalities all

functioning through *one single human nature*. And the psychic activity of those personalities would construct for them a universe, not out of any pre-existing ὕλη or chaos of matter, but by the activity of spirit which is in its nature creative. And the life of mutual love and service of each of the human personalities might have continued for ever a reflection of the life of mutual love and service in the Blessed Trinity. But, for a spiritual being, freedom of the will is a necessity. And the Fall was the revolt of the individual against the unity; the determination of each personality to be himself and seek his own good. And the revolt, shattering the unity of human spirit, shattered by necessity also the visible universe. For the universe to have remained unaffected by the shattering of the unity of human spirit would have been

> 'As if mine image in the glass
> Should tarry when myself am gone.'

Human nature being now shattered to bits, a new humanity was needed. This was supplied by the New Humanity assumed by the Logos. We speak of Christ taking 'our nature' upon Him. But it was not the old fallen nature. It is a new humanity of the same kind. And as the Holy Spirit was the creative Agent in the formation of the first Adam, so He is the creative Agent in the formation of the second Adam. For Christ is 'Incarnate by the Holy Ghost.' But this is an event which occurred, not in B.C. 4 or 3, but 'from

the foundation of the world.' And immediately the return to Unity (evolution) of the visible world began. And the world drama is the slow and gradual consummation of 'the gathering together of all things in Christ.' Just in so far as the solidarity of humanity is a realised fact, so far we are 'in Christ Jesus.' Just so far as there are still imperfections and fractures due to the Fall, so far we are still imperfect and fragmentary. In a sense we are already 'members one of another.' In a sense we are still shattered fragments of a once perfect unity. Something of the beauty and unity of God's plan for the world is even now visible. Yet still the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together waiting for . . . the redemption. And the reunion one with another can only be effected by the old nature being done away and the new nature raised up in us. We are to be reunited by being all one in Him in whom we have obtained an inheritance. And the final consummation of our union with one another and in Christ must be a moral one, *i.e.* it must be voluntary, a free surrender of self, and a free acceptance of self-less life in the unity. *Self-less*, like that of God; not self-annihilating as depicted by Brahmanical teachers. As the distinctions in the Godhead are eternal, so that centre of knowledge, will, and love which each man knows as his own personality, will abide in Christ, and continue, and not be lost as a drop of water in the universe.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL ATTACKED

The problem re-stated—The incidence of suffering—Should only the wicked suffer?—Physical pain—Catastrophes of civilisation—Providence—Do all things work together for good?—The uses of Faith.

THE PROBLEM RE-STATED.—We are now in a position to attack the problem of Evil effectually. That problem, it will be remembered, was seen to be twofold, combining under a common title of Evil the two distinct conceptions of Moral Evil or Sin, and Physical Evil or Pain. The problem we desired to attack may, therefore, be stated thus :—

(*a*) Why does an All-wise and All-good God allow men to sin?

and secondly—

(*b*) Why does an All-wise and All-good God allow men to suffer pain, bodily or mentally?

We saw also that there were special difficulties, such as—'Why are the innocent allowed to suffer for the guilty?' and—'Why does there seem to be no use or value in much suffering so that it works no improvement?'

Now, as to the first question, we can at once boldly reply, that God allows men to sin because

He cannot help it, except at the cost of an alternative which He cannot adopt. A spiritual being must be a free being, able to choose freely between good and evil. So, in creating man, even an omnipotent God had the choice of creating beings which might fall, or else non-moral machines which would work perfectly, but could not rise to anything which could be called virtue. And when such a being as man was once created and had fallen, again there could be, even for an omnipotent God, but two alternatives, namely, to annihilate him, or to have infinite patience, pleading, inspiring, and waiting to lead him to repentance. And this is exactly what we seem to see in the world. And if the process is slow it is man who is to blame and not God. We may at times think that God might with advantage punish evil a little more heavily, and with what I may perhaps call a more dramatic effect. If the murderer, the adulterer, and the oppressor were struck by lightning in the very moment of his crime, we think other men would be the more afraid to offend. But when, in our hearts, we thus charge God with folly it is really we that are fools. The longer I live the more convinced I am that evil is never overcome of evil, and the wisdom of God seems to me to be displayed as much as His loving-kindness in His long patience with evil-doers and His desire to overcome evil with good. For after all a man is good not because he is 'the more afraid to offend,' but because he

loves righteousness and hates iniquity, and it is good men, not well-behaved men, that God desires. And so we may answer our first question, namely, 'Why does an All-wise and All-good God allow men to sin?' by replying that it is because the only alternatives (not to create beings in His own image capable of loving Him and being loved by Him, or to annihilate them when made) are such as an All-wise and All-good God could not adopt.

The second question is closely bound up with the first. But if the connection between human spirit and the visible universe is such as we have supposed, and such as the idealistic philosophy has always taught it to be, we may boldly reply to the question—'Why does an All-wise and All-good God allow men to suffer pain?' by answering—Because a fallen race cannot possibly inhabit a perfect universe. And even if this is not so, even if there is no such connection between the corruption of the whole race and imperfection and evil of the visible universe, we may, I think, still declare that it would be very undesirable, and certainly no improvement on the present condition of things, that a sinful and corrupt race should inhabit a perfect world, free from pain, sorrow, or death. Supposing God said to one of His critics—'Well, come and take My infinite power; remake the world nearer to your heart's desire; anything you desire shall be changed except this freedom of the human will with its resulting phenomena of virtue and of sin.' Would

any one care for the task even though infinite wisdom were given along with infinite power? Or rather, would not infinite wisdom prompt any one to leave things as they are as far as suffering and death are concerned. A world where sin went always with joy and health and happiness is not one I care to contemplate.

THE INCIDENCE OF SUFFERING.—At this point I can imagine an objector declaring that it needs no infinite wisdom to suggest at least two or three improvements. Surely if we had the conduct of things we should arrange that the following rules should be observed:—

1. The innocent should never suffer for the guilty; but the punishment should always fall on the sinner and on him alone.
2. There should be no needless pain, nor any that did not work out some good result. Nor should more pain be in any case inflicted than the least which would produce the desired effect.

But it is very doubtful if even here any case for alteration can be made out. For a very little thought will convince any one that, except in so far as merely bodily pain is concerned, such alterations might well involve more evil than good. How are you proposing to re-order the world so that the sin and disgrace of a husband, a father, or a child shall cause no pain to the wife, children or parents?

As we saw in Chapter III., such a state of things would only be possible in a world where either there were no such relationships, or where there was no sin to entail shame and misery, or lastly, where there was no natural affection laying us open to sympathetic suffering. The second alternative, that of there being no sin, brings us once more face to face with the free-will difficulty; we see that that solution is impossible even for God. The first and last alternatives, that by which we should have no relations, or that by which, having them, we should be indifferent to their evil doings, may safely be described as alternatives which few would choose. I think even in this poor world of ours we are justified in saying that good children are a source of more joy than bad children are of sorrow, and that love of parents, relations, and friends brings a balance of happiness even though we do sometimes have to sorrow for their evil deeds. But even if I am wrong, even if the bitter pang of a thankless child and the shame of a disgraceful father or mother is more common and more grievous than any happiness that can be put on the other side of the account, so that when a balance is struck kindred and friends must be adjudged an evil (the idea is to my mind absurd), still we must not blame God. Sin lieth at the door; these things would be a good if man were still what he was, what he ought to be, and what God means him to be again some day. Only now the things that should have been for our health

are to us an occasion of falling. We must not blame God for that.

Should only the Wicked Suffer?—But there is a further consideration. Suppose to-morrow the change were made, and no man bore another's punishment, or by his sins injured any but himself, would it be an improvement? I think not. Its first result would be, I fancy, a great outbreak of wickedness. How many sinners defend themselves—quite mistakenly but quite honestly—by saying—'Well, I do nobody any harm but myself. It is my own affair surely.' In this world, where in very truth we are all members one of another, and where if one member sins all the body suffers, the claim that any sin is merely the sinner's own affair is a delusion. But how if it were true? Many men are withheld from evil by the fear of harm, moral or otherwise, to others. And note that this restraint has moral value. The man who only does not sin because he fears the consequences to himself is wise perhaps but not good. The man who does not sin lest he should bring undeserved suffering on the innocent is not perfect—he does not yet hate evil for its own sake, nor love good—but he denies himself for purely unselfish reasons. He is not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.

Nor do I think that, if we could get the suffrage of all who, since the world began, have suffered for the sins of others, we should be certain of finding

them against such an arrangement or desirous that the sinner only should suffer. Rather I think in many cases we should find the complaint being just the reverse. The burden-bearers, the true Disciples of Christ in every age and under every religious disguise, would more probably cry—'Let us bear all the punishment; let their stripes be laid on us.' And even when that would not be so, even where the punishment has been unwillingly borne, as, of course, must often be the case, even there I am not sure that vicarious suffering is always the evil people represent it to be. I know how children are tormented from birth by hideous diseases they had no part in contracting, and how simple homely people are ruined by scoundrels they have never seen, and how unequally the rewards of virtue and of vice are distributed. And yet I seem to see, through it all, some trace of justice and of mercy. I do not pretend to see enough for demonstration; I see much for confirmation of faith. For one thing, while deserved suffering and pain often only seem to harden the sinner, and to do him no good (more often perhaps than not), yet, on the other hand, undeserved suffering and pain do, if I may trust my experience, yield fruits of righteousness. I do not pretend for a moment that I have an universal formula which will justify and explain all cases of vicarious suffering, and prove them to be wisely ordered. But when I have allowed for those which seem to me clearly

unavoidable, even for divine omnipotence (such as the case already quoted of a wife and children suffering from the sin of the father), and those where any alteration would involve at least as much loss as gain, and those where the sufferer willingly and joyfully bears the burden, and those where the burden, unwillingly borne, yet yields peaceable fruits of righteousness, then I doubt whether the good does not out-balance the evil. In a word, I refrain from blaming God because I doubt whether, if I had all His power, and all His wisdom, and all His love for men, I could do so very much better than He myself.

Physical Pain.—But it must be admitted that so far we have been thinking largely, though not exclusively, of mental suffering, shame, disgrace, and unhappiness, and of those social disabilities, poverty, want, and hardship, which accompany the first kind of evils. But what of purely physical evil? Why does God allow cancers, and volcanic eruptions and fires, and shipwrecks? Why is the loving mother, after a lifetime of devotion to her family, brought to her grave by eighteen months of unimaginable agony from cancer? Why is a countryside overwhelmed in a minute by all the horrors of an earthquake, or an eruption? Why does a burning house consume little children and women, or a shipwreck carry to a fearful death hundreds of passengers who had neither knowledge

of, nor responsibility for, any fault in navigation. Here are difficulties enough. Let us separate what I will call natural ills (cancer, volcano, etc.) from ills of man's civilisation (fires, wrecks, etc.), and deal with the first class first.

Now clearly we have something to start from in the belief that there is a connection, necessary and intimate, between the sinful condition of human spirit and the evil condition of the visible universe. If a sinful race cannot inhabit anything but an evil world, then cancers and volcanoes (or some other form of physical evil) will remain till the whole race is redeemed and sanctified. The evil of the world is, that is to say, the necessary result of moral evil in man. That does not mean, I need scarcely say, that this cancer or that volcano *is some one's fault*. It merely means that just so long as spirit is evil it will show itself to be evil by a reflection of evil in the visible world. The creation will groan and travail till the redemption. But can we not go further? Can we not believe that pain is not merely a witness to the existence of sin, but an incident in its cure. Does the creation, groaning and travailing, only *wait* for the redemption? Do its pangs work no deliverance? I do not think it is fanciful to believe that they do. In the human body pain is not merely a witness that there is something wrong; it is often an incident in the passage to a better state of things. Thus, a broken leg, when once it is set, gives little pain till it begins

to knit; then there is intense pain. The passage from a bad state to a good one is painful. So too in the intellectual sphere. Ignorance is not necessarily painful; but to pass from a state of ignorance to one of knowledge one must take pains. And so in the moral sphere. Evil habits may be a source not of pain but of actual pleasure. Repentance and reformation are hard and painful, so as to be called indeed a 'crucifixion of the old man,' a daily 'dying.' If the universe bears to the totality of human spirit something of the relation of the human body to the individual soul, may we not hope that no pang of agony is altogether hopeless, but that every mite of pain, from the pain of the bird in the claws of a cat to the willingly borne pain of the martyr, pays off something of the debt, effects something for our restoration, and fills up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ? If we could believe this we should be able to see every sufferer, as James Hinton suggests in his exquisite little book, *The Mystery of Pain*, as a willing or unwilling martyr. And this would be a tremendous gain. For much of the trouble lies just here, that our sufferings seem so useless. 'I should not mind, but I don't see what I have done to suffer so,' is a cry that every parish clergyman has heard, and it is but the expression of man's natural, and surely not unjustifiable demand, that God should do nothing unreasonable, nor inflict needless pain. If when we suffer we could see ourselves summoned

to no useless task, but rather as fellow workers with Christ in the great work of redeeming the world, how much easier pain would be to bear. If we must bear the martyr's sufferings, let us, if we may, share his conviction that our sufferings are not in vain, but are gladly accepted for the sake of what they will yield.

CATASTROPHES OF CIVILISATION.—The idea of suffering, as martyrdom, always working some good even when borne unwillingly and without understanding, makes a fitting starting-point for our attack of the problem in the special form it takes where man's handiwork is concerned. Even if the problem presented by a cancer or an earthquake has some common factors with that presented by a great fire or a shipwreck, yet clearly they fall into different classes, and have elements which need separate treatment. Clearly human carelessness, greed, disregard for safety as compared with gain, ignorance, culpable or otherwise, and stupidity, are all possible factors in a *Titanic* disaster in a way that they are not in the eruption of a Mount Pelee. Now, every such disaster tends to produce some improvement for future generations. Shipowners are forced to supply more boats; wireless instalment is required on all ships; the idle rich are led to think less of saving useless time and more of saving lives, their own and those of men in the stokeholes. In a sense those who perish may be

said to be unwilling martyrs who by their deaths purchase some advantage for others. It will be said that it is a great price to pay for a small advantage, and one which might have been cheaply gained in other ways. That is so. But so too the ways of nature seem clumsy and cruel. So many seeds must be sown, so many young animals or birds or fishes born, so many must then be trampled out of existence, that only the best may survive, and so the race may progress. And what is the gain? In many weary generations there is gained one bright blotch of attractive colour on the male bird's wing covers, one inch of additional height in the giraffe's neck, one shade more of ferocity or cunning in the tiger's character. Yet it seems that, in a fallen and divided world, any advance in natural equipment can only be attained by these means. Does it not also seem, in this poor fallen world, as if in man's affairs too it must needs be that one die for the people? It is a clumsy method, but, when one considers carefully, is it God or man who is to blame?

And at any rate in such disasters, if anywhere, we have examples of the way in which willingly to accept suffering and death is to transmute them into martyrdom, and rob them of all this evil. The soldiers on board the *Birkenhead* drawn up in line to die while the boats ply backward and forward saving the women and children, the stewardess of the *Stella* tying her own life-belt on a child, these

and ten thousand other heroes make us see that even the worst disaster is not all an evil, but that there is a power which can bring good out of them. It is like much in this chaotic world, a clumsy, muddled business in which evil jostles good. Yet good is there if we look for it.

PROVIDENCE.—There is one element common to all great disasters, whether natural, as earthquakes, or fruits of man's civilisation, like great shipwrecks, and that is the seemingly indiscriminate character of slaughter. And I am sure it is this which men find, whether consciously or not, hard to reconcile with God's mercy or love. I don't think most men put it into words, even in their own minds, but the idea is that the death of five hundred on one ship is more dreadful and more hard to reconcile with God's goodness than the death of five hundred on five hundred different ships at the same time, because each of the later five hundred has been, or may have been, selected separately by God when his full time was come, while the five hundred who perish together seem to have been taken in the lump, the good with the bad, and the ready with the unready. But is that necessarily so? Can we not believe that God so overrules men's actions that no man, no matter how, when, or where he dies, dies a moment before God meant him to? I am myself deeply convinced that the words, 'Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without my

Father,' represent a literal truth, and that, with the solitary exception of *the act of sinful will*, nothing is done in the world of which God is not the doer. Let me make what I mean clear. Suppose A wilfully murders B. The act of sinful will on A's part is his free act, and A alone is responsible. But he could not have murdered B unless God had willed it. He could have had no power at all against him except it had been given him from above. If, in God's eternal purposes, the time for B's death had not come he would have escaped. This would not in the least have affected A's guilt. He would still be a murderer in will if not in deed. But B would not have died. Now this view will be met by two objections, namely :—

(*a*) Is it possible that God can overrule the wills of millions of free beings, each freely willing what he chooses, so that everything done in the world should, with the exception of the individual acts of will, be God's doing ? In a word, is the idea of an effectual Providence at all compatible with such a doctrine of individual free will as has been sketched in the previous chapters ?

(*b*) Supposing it is *theoretically possible* that God thus orders the world so that, free will notwithstanding, 'not a sparrow falleth to the ground without my Father,' yet what possible proof is there that He does do so ? These questions require careful consideration.

Clearly we must answer the first in the affirmative, and declare that it is theoretically possible for God so to order the world that no man should die a second before God wills it. For, supposing A wills to kill B, what is impossible for God is, without destroying A's free will, to make A no longer *wish to kill* B. It is no interference with A's free will to prevent him from killing B. And so, without involving a contradiction (as would be the case if God *made* a free being leave off willing what he did will, and *compelled* him to will the opposite) it is possible for God to prevent A from realising his wish. Indeed, it would clearly be possible for man. To take a parallel case : if my little nephew wishes to throw his toy bricks at the looking-glass, I cannot *make him not wish to do so*. But I can easily prevent his putting his wish into execution. So then, God in any individual case cannot prevent a man from willing evil, but can certainly prevent him from bringing that evil will to an effective issue. But what is not impossible in any given case must be, to infinite wisdom and power, possible in fifteen hundred million cases. What makes us doubt is the immensity and complexity of the problem. But immensity and complexity are not words which have any weight when used in connection with a problem set before Omnipotence. We denied that God could make a free being choose 'this' rather than 'that,' not because the task was too great for Him, but because it was intrinsically impossible

and absurd, involving a contradiction in terms. But that God should guide, direct, rule, and mould a single life, baulking the exercise of the evil will, and bringing out effects quite contrary to those willed and expected, presents no contradiction at all. Nor does the idea that He should do so in countless millions of lives at once. It baffles our imagination. It is a task for infinite power and infinite wisdom. It is not an impossibility.

When we turn from the first question, namely, whether an effectual divine providence is possible, to the second, namely, what proof there is as to the existence of such a providence, the answer that I shall offer will seem abundantly satisfactory to some, and utterly unsatisfactory to others. I should say that the best proof that there is an effectual divine providence is supplied by the conviction of religious men in all ages that they have been able to detect the workings of such a providence in their own lives. It is not merely that such men have felt that they owed any good they had ever done to God's help. They have felt that, good, bad, and indifferent, their actions have been overruled and used by God for His own merciful ends. I should like to quote two examples of what I mean. One was the saying of an old man of over eighty, one of the most reserved men on religious topics I ever knew. On the only occasion on which he ever spoke freely to me on religious topics he said: 'I have always been a delicate man, and almost all my life a poor

one. Often looking ahead I did not know how I should provide for my wife and family, or make both ends meet. Looking back I can see how at every turn of my life God was waiting for me with a miracle. He has ordered my steps. I can indeed say—Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life. It has been all His doing from start to finish.' The other case, I think, supports this. I was listening to a very young man delivering a very violent atheistical speech. Suddenly, an elderly man standing next to me nudged me and said: 'Eh! yon 's young. Let him marry a good woman, and bring up four children, and he 'll know whether there is a God or not.' What can this have meant except that the speaker had found traces of God's interference in his own actual experience. Nor can I believe that the intense religious fatalism—I must use the word, though it carries with it many associations I would gladly dispense with—which we find in so many religious men and women in history, and in daily life, both among Christians and among men of other religions, is a matter merely of theory. It must be based surely, at least in some cases, on some experience. For my own part I feel bound to give my testimony, for what it is worth, and I can only say that as one grows older so the conviction deepens that the working of God's providence is as real and its effect on our lives as powerful, as our own free will. The two, running as it were at right angles

to one another, are the warp and the woof which form the texture of our lives.

But if there is indeed this effectual providence, then no man dies till the right time ; the time, that is to say, when God decides that he should die. And this will be equally true whether he dies by himself as the result of what we call natural causes, or as one of some hundreds, or thousands, as the result of an accident or a convulsion of nature. There is, on this view, nothing indiscriminate in God's action. Now, of course, as I have said, this view will be entirely satisfactory to those who believe that they have recognised God's dealings in their own lives. And it will be absolutely unsatisfactory to those who not only have not so recognised His hand, but believe any such recognition to be a delusion. And which view is right each reader must decide for himself.

Do All Things Work Together for Good ?—My own view then would be, not that 'all 's for the best in this best of all possible worlds,' but that all is as good as it can be while man is a sinful and corrupt creature. All evil desires are contrary to the will of God. He would not allow them, if He could prevent them without the destruction of the nature of His creatures as free beings. The results of such evil desires are evil acts. These God overrules so that nothing happens contrary to His providence. But seeing that He has made us

members one of another, and capable of feeling sympathetic pain and grief and shame, it inevitably happens that the sins of the fathers are visited on the children. And though it is not, in the first place, God's will that any man should sin, yet, when he has sinned, that his sins should so be visited on his children, and that the innocent should be punished with and for the wicked, may be said to be part of God's plan, and in accordance with His will. And before we make haste to blame Him we shall do well to consider the whole problem, and to ask (1) how far such an arrangement could be altered without such a reconstruction of human nature as would involve more loss than gain; and (2) how far we would wish to alter the arrangement if we had the power. And of physical pain, disease, and death, we may say that such things are the inevitable reflection, in the physical world, of moral evil and imperfection in the spirit of man, it being probably impossible for a sinful and corrupt race to inhabit a perfect world. And if we are mistaken in this and it is not impossible for a sinful race to inhabit a painless and perfect world, we may yet safely assert that it would be highly undesirable, and that if all physical evil (pain) disappeared from the world to-morrow, while moral evil (sin) remained, the world would be a worse and not a better place. So, too, of the incidence of suffering on the innocent, we may say that it is probably an inevitable and necessary result of human solidarity, so that, without

ceasing to be members one of another (in the increasing closeness and growing perfection of which unity lies all our hope), this vicarious suffering could not be avoided. And here again, even if we are wrong, and such vicarious suffering could have been avoided, we may boldly assert that it would have been a very bad thing that it should have been. And as we look on pain, and the imperfections of nature generally, as being in all probability the inevitable results of sin, so we may hope and believe that pain is not merely a sign that something is wrong, but an incident in the cure. And this would enable us to see in all sufferers martyrs, and servants of the race, willing or unwilling. Which would help to rob pain and suffering of much of their sting in robbing them of all their uselessness and futility. And in all the catastrophes, whether of nature or of civilisation, we may see things which, having their origin in sin (in the case of catastrophes of nature in the original act of sin which caused the Fall, and in the case of catastrophes of civilisation, in some carelessness, or greediness, or stupidity of men), are in a sense contrary to the will of God. Yet we may also see in them things which God not merely allows, but makes use of, and directs, so that there is nothing indiscriminate in them; nor does anything come to pass contrary to His will, nor any one single person die till He wills it. And nothing but the sin and self-will of fallen man delays the consummation of—

> 'That one, far off, divine event
> To which the whole creation moves,'

and for which God is working and waiting with infinite untiring love and patience and mercy.

THE USES OF FAITH.—There is one more word which needs to be said before this chapter is brought to a close. Many people will say, in their hearts if not openly,—If God is really working, why does He not let us know it more certainly? Why is He not more openly on the side of right, and against them that do evil? Why is it only the favoured few who can discern His hand in the world, if indeed they are not self-deluded?

> 'Oh, that Thou would'st rend the Heavens, that Thou would'st come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence . . . to make Thy name known to Thine adversaries, and that the nations may tremble at Thy presence.'

This is a natural desire, and one that we all feel at times. But whom would it benefit if God declared His ways more clearly? Not the wicked, I think. The longer I live the more convinced I grow that the solution of many of our difficulties lies in a right understanding of *goodness and its conditions*. How is a man converted from his evil ways? Not certainly by being very much astonished and frightened. If God were to work a very obvious and very terrible miracle in the Strand to-morrow,

would one sinner be converted? Many religious people would be glad that they and their faith in the existence of a God had been proved right. Many sinners would be hardened. Some weak-minded people would go mad. But would any people be astonished into goodness? I cannot think so. And so a clearer manifestation of God's working in the world would not, if I am right in this matter, benefit the wicked. On the other hand, it would rob the good of that by which they may most certainly show themselves children of God, namely, a childlike trust in the goodness of their Father, even when they don't understand His ways. Would any one who really knows the sweetness of trust in God desire to change it here and now for a certainty that left no room for faith? I think not.

CHAPTER IX

THE SAME PROBLEM ATTACKED FROM THE OTHER SIDE

The work of the Holy Spirit—Work for a free creature must be *in* that creature—The Body of Christ—The continued existence of Evil—The Solidarity of the Race and Christian Science.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.—In the last chapter we considered the question of God's providence, and I asserted my belief in God's power to overrule the results of man's sinful volitions in such a way as to make everything that happens in the world, *except the individual act of sinful volition*, the work and act of God. To make my meaning clear I may recall the illustration used. A wills to kill B. A's sinful volition is the act of a free spirit. Hence it is A alone that is responsible. The sinful act of will is a thing for which God is in no way responsible, and it is in no sense God's act. But A's determination to kill B will be successful or not according as God wills. If the time decreed for B's death in the eternal counsels of God is not yet come, B will not die. A will, however, be none the less a murderer in will. If,

however, B's time has come, and God wills that such should be B's end, then A will succeed in murdering him. None the less we may say of B that it has 'pleased God to deliver him out of the miseries of this sinful world.' His death is according to God's will for B and is so far God's act. And extending these considerations from A and B to all men, we may say that God so overrules the results of men's free volitions that the most minute detail of the world's happenings is God's work. 'Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without my Father.'

This is one side of the problem. And to this I adhere entirely. But there is another side. The sinful nature of our volitions does in some way affect the course of the world. Things as we see them in the world to-day, and as we find them to have been in history, are not and have not been as God desires. I suppose the one thing which the study of Church History makes plain is that God's will for man is constantly thwarted and rendered vain. Again and again God prepares to do great things, and these preparations fail, and come to nothing, because men have not recognised 'the things that belong unto their peace.' And the reason why God's will for man is thus thwarted is because He works in and through man, and only in and through man. If we are to consider God's work in the world aright, we must regard it as the work of the Spirit of Christ working in the Body of

Christ. But we men and women are 'the Body of Christ and members in particular.' A disembodied spirit may be able to work in a material universe—though there is not, as far as I know, any evidence that such a thing is possible—but, whenever God is found working in the world, He is found working in and through men. And He is hampered and thwarted by the imperfections and weakness of the body in which He has to work. Before we consider the nature of that body, and of its imperfections, we may perhaps consider why it is that God thus works only in and through man.

WORK FOR A FREE CREATURE MUST BE IN THAT CREATURE.—Why does God work only in and through man, and so allow Himself to be hindered and thwarted? Because His desire is for the moral perfection of man and for nothing else at all. It is with God and His creatures as it is with a parent and his children, or a teacher and his scholars; what is done for them must be done *in* them if it is to be of any good. Think of a teacher in a school watching a class writing copies. How the children dirty and spoil their copy-books! What blots and smudges and dog's-ears! And when the lesson is ended, what a wretched collection of copies! Why did not the teacher write them himself? The answer is plain; because the end and object of the school is not the accumulation of a great number of fine copies, a collection of perfect pen-

manship, but the teaching and training of the children. Well-educated children, or at least children as well educated as may be, is the object of the school, and not the production of neat and well-written copies. So in this world God's object is the development and perfection of souls, not the production, as it were, from without, of a perfect social state. Huxley may have thought that if God had made man perform all his actions with perfect precision, at the cost of making him an automaton, the price would have been worth paying, but few people, I should fancy, would agree with him. For surely moral character, as shown in conscious moral action, is the one thing valuable in the eyes of God, and of those who see things as He sees them. In Kant's phrase—Nothing is good but the good-will. For myself, I do not hesitate to declare that the spectacle of a boy or girl struggling in the face of all temptations, and in spite of natural timidity and cowardice, to do the right and speak the truth, moves me to a passion of love and admiration which the greatest, most wonderful, and most useful machine fails to arouse. And if the whole world, physical and social, could be made perfect at this instant at the price of the surrender of moral freedom, I should feel it a bargain not worth making.

Here, as in every moral problem, the freedom of the individual will is the crux of the problem. Nothing has moral value which is not the free choice

of the doer. Mothers send for me and ask me to 'speak to our George, who is going with bad companions.' What can I do? I can talk to George; I can put before him the beauty and attraction of goodness, and the ugliness and future misery of vice. But I can't *make* George be good. What I do must be done in, and not for, George, and must be George's own work. I may argue, and reason, and plead,—what is done must be George's own doing, or, at best, my work in and through him. And so surely it is with God. I do not know what other men's experience may be, but the one thing which seems absolutely certain to me is that I can resist God if I choose. The Holy Spirit may plead, and strive, and make intercessions with groanings which cannot be uttered, but God Himself cannot make me be good; for I am a free creature, and to make me be good would be to substitute a machine for a free creature. And so, what God desires to do for man must be done in man, and when we blame God for allowing man to go on hindering and thwarting His work, we are like a visitor to a school who should blame an infinitely wise and patient teacher for helping the children, and correcting their mistakes, and bearing with their ignorance and their carelessness instead of snatching away the copy-book and writing the copy himself. We reproach God for our own shortcomings, and complain of Him because of His infinite love and long-suffering patience.

THE BODY OF CHRIST.—Let us now turn from the thought of God's work in and for the individual, and consider the whole of humanity as the *Body* in and through which the Spirit of Christ is to work. First of all, I want to say that I do not think that baptized Christians alone are members of that Body. The Spirit bloweth where He listeth, and God works in the world in men of all religions, and of no conscious religion at all. But equally I believe that the great body of baptized Christians constitute the true Body of Christ, the most effective organism of the spirit. Perhaps, though it is a merely personal profession of faith, I may state here exactly what I believe as to Christians and members of other religions, and as to Christianity and all other religions. I do not believe there are any false religions, for all religions are a seeking after God, and all supply truths by which men may live. But I believe Christianity is the one perfect and final religion, in which God is perfectly revealed in Christ to man, and that it is, therefore, the true faith 'once for all delivered to the saints.' The idea that Christianity is itself destined to give way in time to some new religion, or to be absorbed as an element in some higher synthesis which will contain elements contributed by Mahomedanism, Hindooism, Buddhism, and other faiths, appears to me an impossible view for any one who has grasped the meaning of personality, and the need for God to be manifested to man in a Person and not in a body of doctrine.

My whole conception of personality makes the Incarnation a necessity if God is to reveal Himself to man. And so, as I have said, though men of all religions are 'of the Body' and 'members in particular,' yet for the effectual working of the Spirit a more united body is necessary. For many members are unconverted, and hence are not under the control of the Spirit at all. To a greater or less extent we are all in that state. Let the reader ask himself to what extent he is submitted to God's will, and to what extent God can work through him. An unconverted member is a limb of Christ's Body over which the Spirit has no control.

Then the Body is rent with schism. The various bodies of Christians are divided among themselves, by heresies and schisms, and are divided from devout members of other religions by deep differences of faith and practice.

Then again, many members are paralysed by sin. It does not need to be a theologian, or even a Christian, to see that a man sunk in selfishness, drunkenness, vice, evil temper, or sloth, is not a member through whom the Spirit of God can work.

Nor can any single company of believers be an adequate body for the Spirit to work in unless it contains, which no single company does, all the nations of the earth, for each nation possesses its special endowments, and the 'fulness of Christ' can only be shown forth in the fulness of humanity. We want the passionate fervour and devotion of the

African, the religious genius of the Hindoo, the gentleness and dignity and patience of the Mongol, the utter self-sacrifice of the Japanese, the personal honour and truthfulness of the Anglo-Saxon, the purity and the mysticism of the Celt, the intellectual clarity of the French, and the profundity of the Germans. And so with all races. The fulness of Christ needs the completeness of humanity in which to show itself.

To what then may we compare the Body of Christ as it is? Think of a man born with half his limbs wanting; crippled with paralysis, and shaken with St. Vitus' dance. Then, imagine such a man run over in the street, and horribly mangled and broken. And then imagine him trying to speak and work in and through such a body. He might be a great orator; he would hardly make an effective speech. He might be a great musician; he could hardly play a great concerto so that one note could be recognised from another. His spirit might be great, but his body would hamper and thwart that spirit.

Surely it is so with God. We blame God for allowing all the misery of the world. But if man is a free spirit, and if the moral perfection of man, and not merely the physical or social perfection of the world, is God's great object, may we not truly say that God allows all this misery *because He cannot help it*? He can only work for man by working in and through man.

Yet there is no room for despair. Rather for boundless optimism. If the world as we see it were the best that God could create, or that He cared to create, then there would be room for despair. If this is a fallen world, and Christ is indeed reconciling all things to God, then the slowness of the process is no more than may be expected from the greatness of the work.

THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF EVIL.—What then should be our attitude when trying to reconcile the existence of any definite and concrete evil with the goodness of God? For that, be it remembered, is the sole object of this book, namely, to enable a man to recognise the evil, sin and suffering, of the world, and still to retain his faith in a loving and merciful God, Almighty and All-good. What, I repeat, is to be our attitude in face of any particular and concrete evil? First, we must ask if we can see it as in any way the obvious result of sin. Could God have prevented it without causing some particular person not to sin? This wife and these children brought to shame and poverty by the dishonesty of the husband and father! It could only have been prevented in one of these ways :—

1. By making the man honest. And that could only have been effected by destroying the nature of the man as a free creature, and so is no work for the Creator.

2. By creating men and women with no natural relationships, or no sense of love or shame. And that would be, even in this world of sin, a bad bargain, and, in a world as we hope it will be when redeemed, would be the loss of our chief source of joy.

But suppose the case is one in which there is no such close relationship of sinner and sufferer! What of this slum where whole families suffer for the sins of a rich and selfish landlord? What of this brothel where girls suffer for the lust of rich blackguards? Still sin lieth at the door, and still God can only prevent the innocent from suffering for the guilty by altering the fundamental nature of mankind, by which we are members one of another! But this would be too high a price to pay, for the following reasons:—

1. This being members one of another constitutes our likeness to God, and is our chief glory.
2. On it depends the very possibility of our salvation, which is to be effected by our becoming all one in Christ.
3. It constitutes, as has been said, even in this world, our chief source of joy and blessing.
4. It supplies a real inducement, and a *moral* inducement, to righteousness, since the fear of injuring others is an effective and moral cause for resisting sin, whereas the fear of

injuring myself is a practically less effective, and in any case a non-moral motive for right conduct.

But again, suppose the case is one of physical and not moral evil ; a cancer, or a volcanic eruption ! Still, if I am right in believing that the visible universe is the reflection of human spirit, we may say that sin lieth at the door. For God could only alter these things by such a radical alteration of the nature of human spirit as should have one or other of these results, namely :—

1. That a sinful race could body forth and inhabit a perfect, painless world.
2. Or that each man should bear his own exact share of suffering in proportion to his own exact share of guilt, not bearing another's burden.

But as we have seen, neither of these alterations in the fundamental nature of the universe would seem to be an improvement. And, on the other hand, if we may look on pain not merely as a fruit of sin, but as an incident in its cure, then every sufferer is a martyr, a fellow burden-bearer with Christ, nor, even if his sufferings work no repentance in the individual, is the pain useless or wasted.

As we confront each problem we must, of course, think it out on its merits. But the two guiding principles are, I am sure, the freedom of the will, as necessary to the moral value of the individual,

and the solidarity of humanity, as a thing which, even in a world of sin, is the source of most of our blessings, and which we may believe to be the necessary condition of redemption.

THE SOLIDARITY OF THE RACE AND CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.—It is the failure to recognise the importance of the solidarity of the race as a factor in pain and disease which seems to me to be the weak point of Christian Science. I am quite prepared to recognise all physical evil as the creation of sinful human thought, but *not necessarily of my thought alone*. It is no good my trying by myself to think away the imperfections of the physical world so long as I am a member of a great whole, many of the other members of which are actively engaged in creating, by their sinful thought, just these evils. If the whole of humanity together were to 'think true,' no doubt all the evil of the physical universe would disappear. This is no more than to say that when all the race is redeemed 'there shall be a new Heaven and a new Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.' But that is not yet. In the meanwhile it is true not only that where one member suffers all the members suffer with it, but that where one member sins, or 'thinks wrong,' other members may, and will suffer with it. And the mistake of the Christian Scientist is that he forgets that we are members one of another, and thinks that a single individual can 'think'

his world and his body right, irrespective of his fellow members. If a single man were the whole race he might be able to do this. But being but a fragment of humanity, and yet in intimate touch and relationship with his fellow fragments, he is bound to suffer with them.

CHAPTER X

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

Are the ways of God justified ?—What is God doing in the slums ?—The chances of a happy life—The chances of self-development—The chances of salvation—The voluntary nature of sin—The effect of environment—The virtue of different classes—Conclusion.

ARE THE WAYS OF GOD JUSTIFIED ?—So far our argument has been directed to show that the suffering of this world is the result of sin, which God Himself cannot prevent without such an interference with the very nature of man as would amount to a total destruction of the race, as a race of free beings. And further, our argument has gone on to establish the idea that the apparent injustice of the incidence of suffering, by which the innocent suffer for the guilty, is bound up with our nature, as members one of another, and that this could only be avoided by such a fundamental alteration of human nature as would make us isolated units instead of members of a unity which is even now real and is destined to be still more real and complete. And any such alteration would be a grievous injury even in the present world where relationships of kindly affection and social intercourse are on

the whole productive of more goodness and happiness than they are of evil or suffering. And, moreover, such a change in the fundamental nature of man as a member of a unity would destroy his likeness to God and render his complete redemption impossible. And so, according to our argument, God cannot *make man good*, and is reduced to pleading with him, and must have long patience, and work for man in man. And this we find Him doing. And working, of necessity, in and through man He is hindered and thwarted by man, and the answer to the question,—Why does God allow all this suffering in the World? must, in the last resort, be—Because we men are not converted and entirely surrendered to His Holy Spirit.

Now, if we believe that in the end God's desire that 'all men may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth' will be realised, and if we believe that the life of a restored humanity, one in Christ, would be so perfect and so glorious that the pains of this world are worth while, and may be indeed regarded as 'a light affliction which is for a moment,' then, broadly speaking, God is justified. And it is just that, namely to justify the ways of God to men, which we have aimed at in this book. But we are still confronted with one question. What of the individual? Clearly our whole argument presupposes a belief in a personal immortality. A future state of being, no matter how perfect and blissful, is no recompense for present sufferings

unless I am to enjoy it, and personal immortality appears therefore a necessary condition if we are to retain a faith in the justice and mercy of God. If my life here is but a stage in the journey towards a perfection in which I shall bear no conscious part, then it seems to me impossible to find any justice or mercy in the Power which rules this universe. Nay, more, I believe a personal immortality to be necessary for the existence of any system of ethics at all. I cannot develop the point now, but I have never been able to attach any meaning to the idea of 'ought' except as addressed to an immortal being. And so it is fortunate that a great number of converging lines of thought appear, to me personally, to make immortality a certainty. But does life, as now offered to many people, afford any opportunities of preparing for a future life. To put the matter with absolute frankness, are not some children, in a phrase which I believe originated with the late Dean Farrar, 'damned into this world' rather than born into it? What chance have the children of the slums?

What is God Doing in the Slums?—Now this is a subject which needs careful treatment. We may admit at once that the slums of our big cities, and the condition of the submerged classes that live in them, are entirely the fruit of man's sin; of the greed and selfishness of the rich, and the sloth and drunkenness of the poor, and the indifference and

carelessness of us all. And so far God is not to blame. But what of this little boy, born of drunken parents in a slum? What has he done to deserve such a fate? What chance has he from the moment of his birth? How can God be absolved of injustice to *him* personally?

These are serious questions, and clear thinking is necessary. When we ask, 'What chance has he?' what exactly do we mean? Chance of what? Now there are three possible answers, it seems to me, and we may mean any one of them, namely—

(*a*) A chance of a happy life, or
(*b*) A chance of developing all his powers as a man, or
(*c*) A chance of saving his soul.

Let us consider each question separately.

THE CHANCES OF A HAPPY LIFE.—Of this we may say at once that if there were no chances of a happy life it would be no reason for impugning the justice of God. He is under no obligation to give us happiness in this world. I am sure the instinct which teaches us that life ought to be a full, rich, happy, joyous thing is a right one. But that presupposes a state of innocence. For a fallen race there is no such right, and if God can save one soul best by sunshine and another by sorrow there is not merely no injustice in so doing but infinite mercy. A life of happiness is not, so to speak, in the contract.

But secondly, I do not believe that, as far as happiness goes, there is a pin to choose between one class and another. The idea that even the most abject poverty is accompanied by constant misery is as unfounded as the idea that great wealth is always accompanied by light-hearted happiness. The requisites for happiness are three, namely, activity, courage, and unselfishness. By activity I mean a love for work, and a capacity for being interested. Stevenson speaks in one of his books of a man who looks on life with the interest of a snail and the courage of a sheep. To such a man there can be little joy in anything. If every fresh incident brings torments of fear and nervousness, and if one's whole aim is to shirk the claims of life, joy is impossible. Of selfishness it is not necessary to speak; every one knows that it brings its own punishment. But these things are matters of character and temperament and not of wealth or social position. My own belief is that here too, as in the case of happiness, there is not a pin to choose between class and class. The idle poor suffer pangs of hunger, and the idle rich suffer pangs of boredom. I am not sure that the life of the poor, other things being equal, does not offer more opportunities of enjoyment as offering more wants which may be satisfied. But the idea that five hundred nippers on railway lorries represent either more or less enjoyment of life than five hundred public school boys of the same age appears to me absurd. Nor,

if I compare the amount of grumbling and ill-temper displayed by an average of twenty gentlemen in a club, or ladies in a drawing-room, with that displayed by the same number of men in a small public-house, or women at the corner of a mean street, am I led to suppose that the case is any different with grown-up people than with children. Of course, a man who, by his own fault or through misfortune, has come down from easy circumstances to a common lodging-house is, or may be, miserable. But people can be very miserable, given sufficient cause, in any walk of life. Are suicides generally very poor? I think not. On the whole, I conclude that there is no great difference of happiness between one class and any other.

THE CHANCES OF SELF-DEVELOPMENT.—The case here is less easy. Certainly a man who leaves school at fourteen and for the rest of his life performs one dull, mechanical duty in a factory has little chance of developing his powers; and certainly one of the strongest reasons for desiring a more just social system is that all men may have the opportunity of the fullest self-development. But we need to remember that education, of body, mind and soul, is not a question merely of books, and schools, and universities. A clergyman, speaking at a Convention at Swanwick recently, said a profound thing. 'Do not let us,' he said, 'go to working people as if we were educated and they

uneducated. They are educated by life, and I have learned more by sitting at the feet of working men and women than ever I expect to be able to teach.' This, of course, is perfectly true, and many men must have noticed the sanity, depth, and true refinement of many an elderly gamekeeper or farm labourer. People will say, 'Oh, yes! Nature has educated them. We are thinking of the poor in great towns.' But after twenty years in great towns I declare that there are just as many sound, wise, sane men and women among working people in towns. Only, owing to our unfortunate divisions of classes, gentlefolk (so called) don't meet them as they do meet a few gamekeepers and gardeners. I am quite prepared to admit that such men, sound, wise, sane, and with their mental and moral natures well and harmoniously developed, are a small minority among the working classes. But so, I think, they are in all classes. Let the reader carefully consider the next score of respectable middle-class people whom he meets, and ask himself to what extent they have developed their mental, moral, and spiritual natures. If he knows how to allow for what is purely conventional and superficial, I doubt if he will see cause to put the *average* level of self-development among the middle classes much, if at all, higher than in the working classes. What the claim, on the part of the working classes, for more opportunities of self-development and self-culture really means is a claim for more enjoyment

of the good things of life, such as leisure, foreign travel, books, music, paintings, and pleasure generally. And this claim I consider perfectly just and well founded, and the denial of it, or any failure to support it, and to work for its gratification, on the part of the well-to-do seems to me essentially un-Christian. And the poor man has, I hold, a just cause of complaint against society, and good reason for complaining of social injustice. But I cannot persuade myself that the development of personality, which is the fruit of life's discipline, and which may be regarded as the object of life in this world, is effected any less adequately in the poor than in the rich. True riches, according to the Greek sage, consist of those things alone which you can take to shore with you when you are shipwrecked. I do not think the members of one class will have any more of riches of this kind to carry away with them at death than members of any other class. And so, though I think the poor may justly complain of injustice as from their fellow-man, I do not think any complaint of injustice in this connection will lie as against God.

THE CHANCES OF SALVATION.—This is the most difficult of the three questions, and I suspect that it is the form in which most people, consciously or unconsciously, present it to themselves. And yet at the same time it is complicated by another factor, namely, the growing disbelief in eternal

punishment, or indeed in any punishment for sin, other than ill effects in this life, at all. A thousand things go to produce this growing disbelief in a divine judgment after death. There is the lack of deep moral earnestness and of a sense of sin which Gladstone long ago pointed out as a mark of our times. There is a certain hysterical fear of, and impatience with, bodily pain. There is a growing realisation of the love of God; a realisation which on its weaker side tends of course to become a mere degradation of the idea of God, as weakly good-natured, but which on its best side is a real asset in the religious consciousness of our day. But the general result of all these factors working together is a growing unbelief in a future judgment. This is not the place for a discussion on Eternal Punishment, but, if I have managed to make my general point of view clear in this book, readers will have no difficulty in understanding what my opinion on this particular question is. Briefly, I may say that I am sure God is Love, and so desires the salvation of all men. But equally I am sure that God is Perfect Holiness and so cannot make terms with sin. God's forgiveness must involve, and be conditional on, the cure of sin. And this, in a free being, is itself conditional on that free being's own consent. I may put the matter bluntly: I know I can be damned if I choose. Nor do I think that the relationship between ignorance and sin—or to put it from a slightly different point of view,

the relationship between the will, good or evil, and what a man knows—is such that any fuller revelation of the nature and beauty of virtue and of the nature and hideousness of sin, which a future life may bring, need necessarily convert a sinner to virtue. And so I might sum up my own view on future punishment by saying that while I am quite sure that none will be in Hell who retain any, even the least, desire for good or power to enjoy God, yet I am by no means certain, man as a free creature being what he is, that there will be none who will continue to love evil and hate good. And that *is* to be in Hell, since Heaven is the enjoyment of God who has nothing to give but Himself, and Hell is the state of a being deprived, by his own incapacity to enjoy it, of that in which alone man can find eternal satisfaction.

When we come to consider the question of a man's moral character from the particular standpoint indicated by the question—'What are his chances in a future life?'—supposing such a question has any interest for us, and is not dismissed with angry contempt as one which no one but a parson, obsessed with the spirit of early Victorian theology, could ask—we want to clear our minds as to what exactly it is that we are asking. We are not asking about matters of social utility, as to whether he developed into as useful a citizen as he might have done; nor into questions of social aesthetics, as to whether he was a pleasant and agreeable person to live with,

and one of refined manners; nor into questions of social conventions, as to whether he conformed to the ideals of the society in which he lived. None of these questions are relevant. Judged by a standard of social utility the poet Francis Thompson was an utter failure. Judged by a standard of social aesthetics St. Francis of Assisi, who replaced in his sleeve the louse that had fallen out, saying, 'Go back, little brother, for wherefore shouldst thou perish,' must have been a most unpleasant person. Judged by our modern conventions, Alfred the Great, or any other hero of antiquity, would no doubt appear a filthy ruffian. What we need to recognise is the moral value of their attitude to life. In a word, we want to estimate them in terms of that which alone has moral value, namely, *the good will.*

THE VOLUNTARY NATURE OF SIN.—The first step necessary is to recognise the essentially voluntary nature of evil. The old Platonic identification of evil with ignorance is not merely an inadequate conception, it is fundamentally wrong. Where there is absolute ignorance there can be no sin. If a man really and truly does not know that he is doing wrong, he has not sinned. And so if a boy or girl in the slums really and truly does not know that theft, or bad language, or vice, is wrong, they do not sin in these matters. But, it may be urged, they are not the less brutalised and degraded.

But that is not so. The late Fr. Dolling, who certainly knew what he was talking of, has a valuable passage in his book, *Ten Years in a Portsmouth Slum*, on this point. He writes—

'A man who falls from a height is wounded to death, every limb is shattered, every feature disfigured. He who slips on the pavement by a casual chance, pulls himself up and goes on unhurt. Oh, most blessed truth! our falls in Portsmouth entailed no complete destruction of character, hardly any disfigurement at all. Boys stole, because stealing seemed to them the only method of living; men were drunken because their stomachs were empty, and the public-house was the only cheerful place of entertainment, the only home of good-fellowship and kindliness; girls sinned, because their mothers had sinned before them, often their grandmothers too, unconscious of any shame in it, regarding it as a necessary circumstance of life, if they were to live at all. The soul unquickened, the body alone is depraved, and, therefore, the highest part is still capable of the most beautiful development.'[1]

Hence we may conclude that where there is certainly no knowledge of evil there is no sin. The next point is to recognise that where there is sin there is love of evil for its own sake, or at least conscious choice of it. If I act consciously, and not from a mere mechanical impulse, I act from choice. And if a man chooses evil he does so consciously, and in preference to good. There may be all sorts of excuses of sudden temptation, or weakness of

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 17.

will, or what not. But those are excuses. It still remains true that he chose evil and not good. And what needs to be recognised is that that choice implies a love of evil. I am not denying that the lower part of man's nature may incline to (desire and love) evil and that the higher part may prevail. Nor would one deny that the higher part of a man's nature may loathe evil and still be overpowered. But the fact remains that conscious action implies choice, and that a man *acting wrongly* chooses evil and not good, knowing that it is evil. And a man gets drunk because he loves drunkenness more than sobriety; and is ill-tempered because he 'chews a grievance,' as we say in Lancashire, and loves his ill-temper more than he loves kindness; and is vicious because he loves, and gloats over, vice. Lord Clarendon has an essay entitled *Of Impudent Delight in Wickedness*, and the title shows that he knew men and life. When people do wrong it is because they love evil more than good, and when they do well it is because they love good more than evil, and no one ever yet sinned without being to blame for it. It may be objected that many a lad drifts into sin without any love for evil. But he can only so drift if he loves his own way, and hates restraint and effort more than he loves an approving conscience. And experience has made me believe strongly in the reality of conscience, the inner witness of the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit. There may be, and doubtless are, cases

of wrong-doing where, the soul unenlightened, there was not consciousness of evil. But then there was no sin. Where there was consciousness of evil there was sin, and therefore guilt. We may trust the 'Judge of all the world' to do right and allow for exceptional temptations. But I cannot admit that any temptation, however strong, or any circumstances, however bad, can excuse a man for acting against his conscience.

THE EFFECT OF ENVIRONMENT.—The outcome of this long and rather involved discussion will be seen to be this, namely, that if the dwellers in the slums are bad they are to blame for it and no bad conditions are any excuse. This may seem a very hard-hearted conclusion. It would be such if I believed one class to be morally any better, or any worse, than another. But I do not. If I may quote what I wrote a good number of years ago, I would say that I do not find any difference, as far as morals go, between one class and another. If the son of a Duke is good, his goodness will take a different form to that of the son of a costermonger; if he is bad, his badness will take a different form from that of the coster's lad; whether he or the poor boy are good or bad will depend wholly on themselves and the Holy Spirit and not in the very least on circumstances. I have never yet discovered the circumstances in life in which the Devil could not work, nor those in which a man or woman

could not be good if the will were right. This will, of course, appear to many a violent paradox. What, they will cry, do you believe that it is no moral handicap to be born of drunken parents in a slum? That is exactly what I do mean. Of course, I know many cases of children so born who have grown up to be themselves drunken. But, on the other hand, most of the temperance societies I have ever worked with have been officered by men and women whose homes had been made miserable by drunken parents. When a drunkard has a drunken son the moralist who allows great weight to circumstances and environment says, 'Ah, you see the effects of a drunken home.' When a drunkard has a strongly teetotal son, the same man cries, 'Ah, you see the effects of environment. His wretched childhood has been a warning to him.' And this surely gives the solution of the problem. The circumstances which to one man are a snare, to another man are a warning; but the man himself is the determining factor.

> 'Man is his own star; and the soul that can
> Render an honest and a perfect man,
> Commands all light, all influence, all fate;
> Nothing to him falls early or too late.
> Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
> Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.'

The Virtue of Different Classes.—The power of external circumstances to shape character has become so much an accepted dogma among us that

to dispute it seems mere perversity. Yet if there were really the determining power in circumstances that most people suppose, one result would necessarily follow. The most favourably situated class would be the most virtuous. But which is the most virtuous class? I have never known anything approaching to a final answer to this question, and, as I have already said, I have never been able to persuade myself that there is a pin to choose between the classes in this matter. Once when I made this remark in a lecture I was asked if I meant that a hundred men in a common lodging-house would show as high a level of moral character as a hundred members of the Old Boys' Society of a first-rate public school. Clearly, I do not mean anything of the sort. One might as well ask if a ward in St. Bartholomew's Hospital would show as high a level of health as the two teams of a 'Varsity match. Men are in a hospital ward because they are ill, and many men (not all) in a common lodging-house are there because they are drunken, vicious, or lazy. But if we take our classes fairly, which has the highest average of virtue? The labourers, the skilled mechanics, the small shopkeepers, the lower middle class, professional men, the services, the wealthy, the nobility? I will undertake to say that if a vote were taken two things would show themselves, namely, first, that there was no sort of agreement, and secondly, that every one would vote for the class he or she knew best. For as we get to know

men we learn their hidden virtues, and come to excuse their faults, since *tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*. If your judgments are of social utility, or social refinement, or social conventions it is different, but if your judgments are purely moral judgments one class will, I hold, be found to be much like another.

So I conclude that though a child born in a slum has a just cause of complaint against society, and against the idle, indifferent and selfish rich, yet against God he has no cause of complaint, since his chances of being good and of saving his soul are as good in one position as another. Will more be saved from Mayfair than from Bethnal Green ?

Conclusion.—The conclusion of this book is not that all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. Far from it. Rather I find the only explanation of this unintelligible world is supplied by a deep conviction that the whole race of men is a fallen one and deeply corrupted. But I do think that serious thinking and serious living, an effort to interpret the world in the light of one's own soul's experience, and one's own soul's experience in the light of history and contemporary events, do yield a conviction that sinful man is alone responsible, and that God, if He is really a God of perfect Wisdom as well as of perfect Holiness (and therefore as incapable of acting illogically and contradicting Himself as of acting unjustly and denying

His love and His justice), could not alter things for the better except by long patience and forbearing. And that appears to me to be evident in His dealings with us. All that Almighty power can do in putting man in just those circumstances best suited to him, and in overruling his own evil acts so as to bring out of them any possible good, all this God seems to me to do. To make him good by force, against his will, God cannot do, for that would be to destroy his nature as a free creature. Yet He is slowly working out His purposes in the world, and if we ask why He is so slow, the answer is—'Because we men and women resist His Holy Spirit working in us.'

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